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Contributors



An equestrian holiday is something we've all dreamed about at some point. **Charlotte Anderson** helps you prepare for your fairytale trip on p129.



Kelly McCarthy-Maine spent a day in the company of the great Sir Mark Todd finding out what jumping exercises he uses, so you can try them at home – go to p28.



If you've ever considered making horses more than just a hobby, **Georgia Guerin** has investigated all the ways you can train and qualify for a horsey career – p116.

Welcome

Many years ago, I recall hearing of two horses at a nearby yard who had died of botulism. I had no idea what that was, but I remember my teenage self being very unsettled by the stories of the horses' unpleasant deaths. Twenty years on, and while botulism remains uncommon, it is also frequently lethal, so this month's feature (p78) makes for essential reading. Current research into a potential link between the bacteria that causes botulism and grass sickness is one we will be monitoring closely here at *Horse&Rider*, and we'll bring you the latest news when it's released.

The chances are that your horse wears a saddle fitted specially to him (you probably tried out lots in the process, too), and that it's checked regularly to ensure his comfort. Now ask yourself how much time and care went in to selecting his bit. And yet day in, day out, it sits inside his ultra-sensitive mouth and is one of the key ways that you communicate with him. Bit selection is just as much about conformation as saddle selection is, but many of us have far less understanding of mouth anatomy and how it affects the best mouthpiece for our horses. So before you next ride your horse, read our feature on p90 and consider whether your usual bit is really the right thing for his wellbeing and performance.



Louise Kittle, Editor
Horse&Rider

Louise started riding aged six. She's a qualified BHS IntSM and owns Ted, a six-year-old Irish gelding. Ted is just beginning his ridden career, and Louise hopes he'll make a great all-rounder when he finishes growing!

Louise

**independent
publisher awards**
Winner



This month with the *H&R* team...

Being a self-confessed horse geek (especially when it comes to vetty stuff), I squeal with delight when I learn something new about my favourite animal. And this month our feature on equine sight was packed with nuggets of info that were new to me. I've always been aware that horses don't like walking into dark places and it's never really occurred to me why this is the case, so I was

interested to discover the answer. And did you know that when your horse is working on the bit he can't see anything ahead of him? Me neither! Find out more fascinating facts on p88.

Lucy Turner, Assistant Editor

Horse&Rider

Discover our team's wealth of horsey experience at horseandrideruk.com

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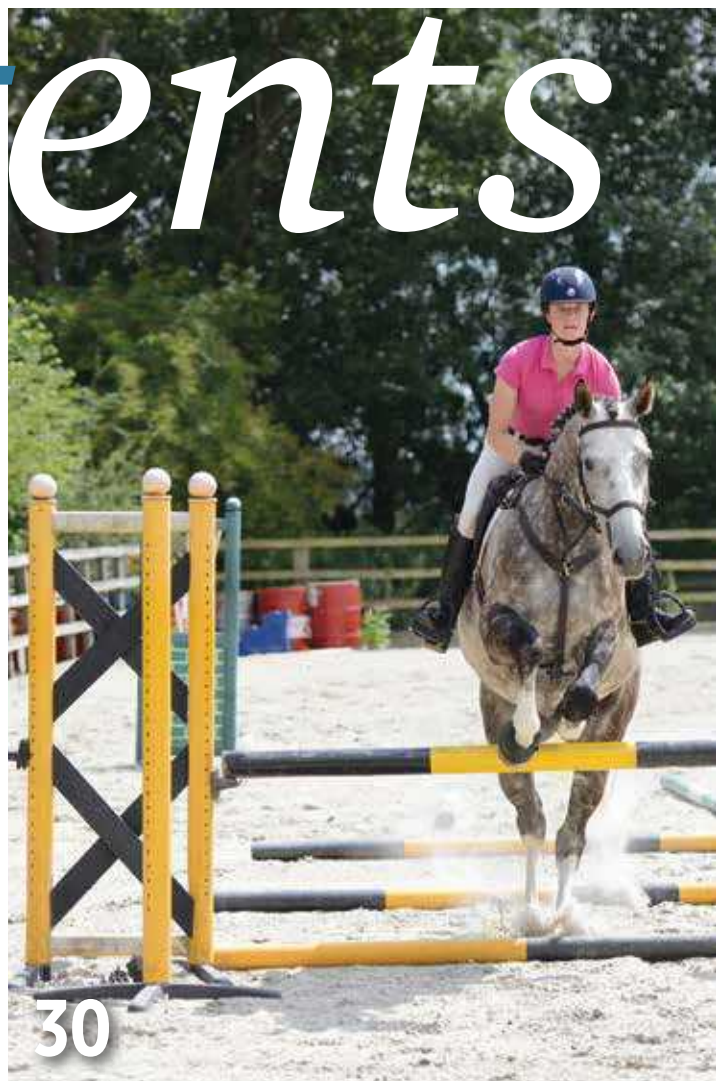
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Cover photo by Bob Atkins



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Let it snow!

Although we've had a mild autumn and about as much rain as we can take, we're prepared for all the good things that the cold weather can bring. Yes it's hard work caring for a horse in the winter, the roads

are occasionally impassable and there's a lot of mud to contend with, but when it snows you can truly appreciate the beauty of the British countryside. So get ready to wrap up warm, stockpile the hot chocolate and biscuits at the yard, and brace yourself for the big chill. ➤

Horseworld



HorseworldNews

Night at the Oscars

Horseware scooped an award at The Equus Film Festival in New York for its 30th anniversary video *Made by horses, for horses*. The film, starring four of Emma Massingale's Connemaras manufacturing Horseware rugs, was featured in December *Horse&Rider*.

Tom MacGuinness, CEO and founder of Horseware, said: "We are thrilled beyond belief with our awesome, horse-themed Oscar. We really enjoyed making our video and are blown away by how well it has been received among the equestrian community."

Emma Massingale also won the award for best short documentary with her video *No reins, no rules, no limits*.



Photos: Phil Mingo/Pinnacle, Tom Sandberg/Pinnacle

Hooves like thunder

Racegoers flocked from far and wide to witness a charity Clydesdale race at Exeter Racecourse. Six professional jockeys raced the Clydesdales, whose normal vocation is to carry riders across Dartmoor, over two furlongs. The horses were eager on their way to the start and all six leapt into action. It was a close finish, with Midge ridden by James Best triumphing. The Clydesdales' owner, Aileen Ware, said: "The horses were fantastic and they really enjoyed themselves – it's a change from their day job and it's a good cause, too." The event raised more than £2,400 for the Devon Air Ambulance, with three bookmakers donating almost £1,000 between them.



Ending on a high

The end-of-year FEI listings were released with a number of Brits in pole position. Charlotte Dujardin has retained her lead in the dressage rankings now for 28 consecutive months, finishing more than 450 points ahead of second-placed German rider Kristina Bröring-Sprehe. Sophie Christiansen topped the tables in para dressage, with three other British team mates also in the top 10. Sixteen-year-old Phoebe Peters and her ride, SL Lucci, retained their title as number one pony dressage combination.

In showjumping, Scott Brash has finished the year heading the FEI Longines rider rankings, with eight consecutive months at the top. Unfortunately for the Brits, the seemingly unbeatable Micheal Jung leads the eventing rankings, with William Fox-Pitt finishing best of the Brits in fourth place.

Equine charities unite

Staff and volunteers from World Horse Welfare, the RSPCA, Redwings Horse Sanctuary and The Donkey Sanctuary have come together to round up a herd of more than 40 horses and ponies from a site in East Sussex. The group had been growing in number due to uncontrolled breeding, leaving their owner unable to cope. The round-up ran smoothly due to the combined efforts of all the teams involved, with minimal stress to the horses.



Equine escapee

A donkey on the run in Oklahoma was captured by police officers and given a ride home in the back seat of a police car, returning him to a worried owner. The police nicknamed the donkey Squishy after they managed to squeeze him into the car.



Photo: Norman Police Department

Caught in a storm

Storm Desmond caused chaos across the British Isles, leaving many horses and donkeys stranded in their fields, which more closely resembled rivers and lakes. In many cases, rescue services were unable to reach the horses due to safety regulations, and it was members of the public with tractors and boats that made the rescues.

One donkey in Ireland was stranded for 12 hours after escaping from his field when a nearby river burst its banks. His rescuers came to him by boat, attached a life ring to his body to help him stay afloat and then towed him for half an hour back to shore to a worried, but elated, owner.

Equestrian TV exit

Despite already receiving minimal coverage on television, horse lovers are warned of further reductions of equestrian coverage at their favourite events. The BBC has announced it is "exploring a phased exit from the broadcast red button service". The red button facility enables viewers to watch live events, such as Badminton and Olympia, in full, whereas only the highlights are shown on terrestrial channels. The BBC, which is under pressure to reduce spending and streamline its operation, is planning on focusing on the iPlayer facility rather than the red button.



Horse&Rider ON TOP

Horse&Rider Editor, Louise, scooped the Editor of the Year Award at the Professional Publishers Association awards.

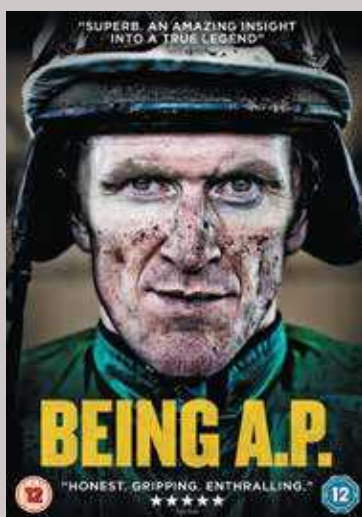
independent publisher awards
Winner

Behind the scenes



Being AP, a documentary detailing the career of champion jockey AP McCoy, has been released on DVD. The film takes an in-depth

look at one of the world's greatest sportsmen and his fascinating addiction to winning, horse racing and the incredible sacrifices he made to dominate racing for 20 years. It follows AP through his exhaustive training routine, complications from the various injuries he's endured throughout his career, and the effect this has on him and his family. The documentary is a mixture of archive footage and behind-the-scenes access to his team.



HorseworldDiary

The competition season is just around the corner, but before you throw yourself in head first, there are a few more fun things to see and do in March

Pippa Funnell



Piggy French



H&R's evening with Pippa Funnell and Piggy French **4 March**

➔ Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire

Join the *Horse&Rider* team to see the eventing stars in action with their top horses. Pippa and Piggy will be sharing with us the secrets to their success, how they bring on young horses, and their favourite advice for jumping and flatwork.

Admission: Adult tickets £25 and group discounts available

horseandrideruk.com/shop

Live lambing weekend **5-6 and 12-13 March**

➔ Reaseheath College, Cheshire

If you haven't been to a lambing weekend before, this is a must. It's a real treat for the whole family to enjoy the unique experience of seeing newborn lambs. The Reaseheath Zoo, which houses meerkats, lemurs, tapirs, otters, birds of prey and companion animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, will also be open over the two weekends. There will be free car parking and on-site catering.

Admission: Adults £5, children £4, under 3s go free. Family ticket £15

reaseheath.ac.uk

The Festival, 15-18 March



Crufts, 10–13 March



Crufts 10–13 March

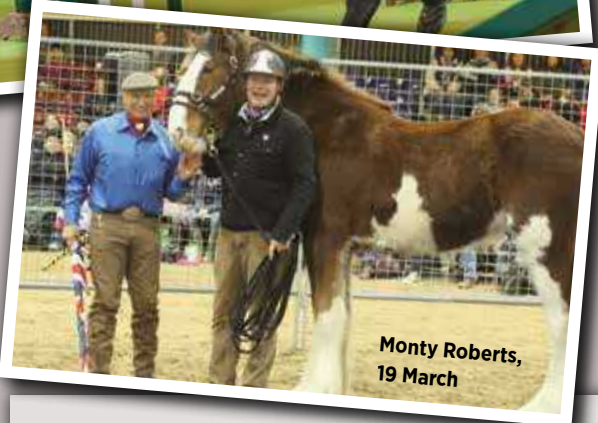
➔ The NEC, Birmingham

Join the biggest and best dog show on Earth for a show-stopping, fantastic family day out. The arena is packed with agility, flyball, displays and competitions throughout the event, with more than 22,000 canine competitors. There is also the chance to discover, meet and greet more than 200 breeds.

Admission: Adult advance tickets from £16.20

crufts.org.uk

Photo: onEdition



Monty Roberts tour 19 March

➔ Kingston Maurward College, Dorset

Monty Roberts, also known as 'the man who listens to horses', returns to England for three tour days in 2016 alongside Kelly Marks. Using his own training technique, Join-Up, Monty will demonstrate how he works with horses to gain their trust and solve their problems. The demo at Kingston Maurward will also include a special guest appearance from horse lover, Martin Clunes.

Admission: Adult advance tickets £30

intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk

The Festival 15–18 March

➔ Cheltenham Racecourse, Gloucestershire

The Festival is one of the highlights of the jump season, with an atmosphere that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Attended by more than 230,000 fans over the four days, The Festival epitomises everything that is great about jump racing. The finest horses, jockeys and trainers battle it out for the highest racing honours, to uphold their reputations and be in with a chance of winning a share of the £3.8 million prize pot.

Admission: Adult advance tickets from £30

thefestival2016.co.uk

Photo: David Davies/PA Wire

Ponies Association (UK) Winter Classic 19–20 March

➔ Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire

The first premier event of the season at Bury Farm, the Ponies (UK) Winter Classic is also the first RIHS qualifier for horses, coloureds and mountain & moorland classes. To add to the excitement, you can see the Unaffiliated Dressage Tour, with a ride off to music in the evening.

Admission: Free

poniesuk.org



Great Witchingham International Horse Trials 24–26 March

➔ Great Witchingham, Norfolk

The eventing season is finally on the horizon, so why not go along and enjoy the action? With competition ranging from BE90 to CIC*, there will be plenty to see across the weekend.

Admission: £10 per car and members free

britisheventing.com

Meet...

Pippa Funnell, international event rider

With her lecture-demo with Piggy French just around the corner, Horse&Rider spoke to Pippa Funnell to find out what it is she really loves about eventing

I first wore the Union Jack at the Junior European Championships in Germany in 1986 and it was a very proud moment for me. It was my last year in juniors and the horse I rode, Airborne, was enormous. It was a really twisty cross-country course and it felt like I was steering an oil tanker around slalom poles! Wearing the Union Jack for the first time as a senior in 1997 was also very special. I'd waited a long time after young riders to get my senior call-up, so that felt really good.

Winning the Rolex Grand Slam of eventing in 2003 is definitely the most memorable moment in my career. I won Kentucky on Primmors Pride in the April, Badminton on Supreme Rock in the May and Burghley on Primmors Pride in the September. It was an amazing feeling and it took a while to sink in.

On the other hand, my biggest disappointment was missing out on the London Olympics when my two top horses, Redesigned and Billy Shannon, were injured shortly before selection. There was such a hype and build-up to the games, so when I realised that both my horses would be out I hit quite a low.

Billy Shannon was a very special horse and it was only a minor injury, but I had further heartbreak when she developed leukaemia and had to be put down. It takes a lot to pull yourself back from such major disappointments, but riding nice young horses keeps me going. It keeps my dreams alive, and when they come through for you and you can watch them progress, it's really special. You must have a genuine love of the day-to-day horsey life because so much can go wrong with horses.

I'm proud of all my horses, past and present. Right now, Billy the Biz stands out as a particular achievement. He's always been a great jumper, but I never really considered that he'd be an eventer because he didn't move so well. Then we did the Hickstead Eventers' Challenge in 2013 and I decided to take him eventing for a bit of fun and a personal challenge. He's now competing at three-star level and I can't believe how he's changed. I'm always proud of my horses whenever they try for me.

The hours before I go cross-country at a three-day event are my least favourite part of eventing. I get nervous, feel sick and question 'Why do I do this?'. But then when I have a good ride, I remember exactly why. To prepare for a tough cross-country track, I try to be very strict with myself and ride the course in my head in a positive way, fence by fence, making sure I know all the options, in case things go wrong. Once I've done that, I don't let my mind switch off from this plan. When I'm convinced that I know all the

options and that I'm mentally set to ride positively, then I think 'What's the point of worrying?'.

'Ninety-five percent of a horse's problem is what the rider is doing on top' is what my coach, Ruth McMullen, used to tell me. I love this because it makes you look at yourself and you become more aware of your own role in the way your horse goes.

I always look for an intelligent, trainable brain when choosing a horse. It's an added bonus if he's a good mover, but this combination is hard to find. He has to be a careful jumper as the showjumping has changed quite a bit, but you still need quality Thoroughbred blood, that hasn't changed.

For more information about the demo or to buy tickets, visit horseandrideruk.com/shop



Horse AND Rider
magazine

PRESENTS

AN EVENING WITH

PIPPA FUNNELL & PIGGY FRENCH

Watch their top horses in action and learn their secrets for eventing success. There will also be shopping and a chance to meet the Horse&Rider team.

When: 4 March

Where: Bury Farm, Buckinghamshire

Admission: £25, group discount available

Visit horseandrideruk.com/shop



What's on TV for horse lovers

Tune in to **Horse&Country TV** on Sky 253 or online at play.horseandcountry.tv/. This March, don't miss coverage of the **FEI World Cup Dressage** in Holland. More highlights of equestrian sport come from the **FEI Nations Cup Showjumping** in Florida and Abu Dhabi, the **Argentine Polo Tournament Final** and the **Longines Hong Kong Masters**. Tune in for

Rudall's Round-Up from the JAS Final and don't forget to watch **Backstage Pass with Monty Roberts**.

And for the all-round animal lover, there is **Animal Saints and Sinners** and **Around the Dog World**. For something a little bit different, don't miss **The Lakes on a Plate**, food and nature combined.

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WIN!

A lesson with **Tina Fletcher** and a **KBIS Personal Accident** policy

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WORTH
£798
EACH

Tina competing on KBIS Yorkshire Business

Tina Fletcher is one of Britain's leading lady showjumpers, representing Britain on many Nations Cup teams, and was reserve rider for the London 2012 Olympics. She is also a highly sought-after British Showjumping accredited coach.

In addition to the lesson, winners will receive £500 towards a **12-month Group A Gold Personal Accident policy from KBIS**. The comprehensive policy provides cover on a worldwide, 24-hour basis. This means that you're not just covered while handling or riding horses, but for day-to-day activities, too. Benefits of the policy include dental work, permanent disablement and temporary, total disablement, which provides a weekly benefit if the policy holder can't work following an accident or illness. There are three levels of cover available – Bronze, Silver and Gold – ensuring that there is an affordable option for most budgets.

The lesson with Tina will take place between 1 April and 16 April 2016, subject to her availability, at her yard near Faringdon, Oxfordshire. Winners must be available during this time and are responsible for the transportation of their horse to and from Tina's yard.



At which Olympics was Tina selected as a reserve rider?

Tie-breaker: Tell us why you and your horse would benefit from a lesson with Tina.

The Personal Accident cover is subject to a proposal form and medical history questionnaire. Additional terms may be applied by the insurer based on the information received. The value of the Personal Accident Insurance policy cannot be redeemed. The Personal Accident Insurance policy is non-transferable.

To enter:

Answer the question and tie-breaker on the competition entry form on page 152 or visit horseandridercompetitions.co.uk to enter online, and for full terms and conditions. Please also provide one ridden photo of you and your horse, and a brief description of your ability and experience as a combination. Entries must be received by 29 February 2016. No purchase necessary.

For more information, visit kbis.co.uk



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*compared to other competition mixes







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If you want to comment on an article in Horse&Rider or share your thoughts, then drop a line to Georgia Guerin – address on p18. Remember to include your contact details and shoe size!

Tweet box

Find out what our favourite horsey people are saying on Twitter this month



@emilykingg_
(International event rider,
Emily King)

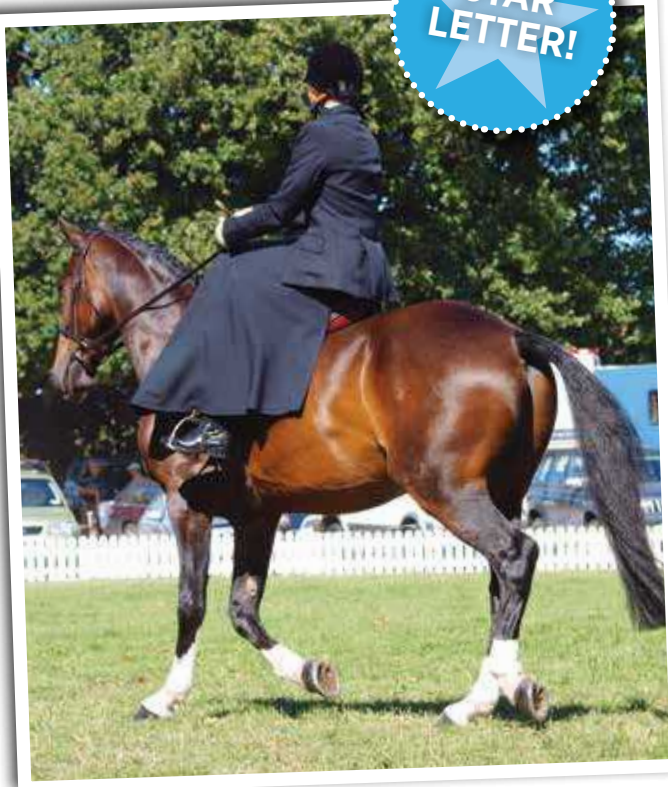
Big C ain't impressed with the rough seas and delays at Dover! I think he's contemplating swimming!

@RedwingsHS
(Redwings Horse Sanctuary)

Little Sean at Redwings Oxhill just can't get enough of his breakfast!



Stock image



SIDE-SADDLE SUCCESS

I would like to share my joy in fulfilling a lifetime's ambition. With the help of the fabulous teaching team of Pie the horse and Anne Comrie from Houston Farm Riding School, I have now ridden side-saddle.

The whole experience was amazing. I had to learn a completely new skill and new aids, relearn all the basics of riding and make new muscle memories just to stay on board! I felt completely safe, but miles out of my comfort zone. With patience from Pie and understanding from Anne, I made rapid progress and by my second lesson I was thrilled to be cantering around quite comfortably.

While side-saddle is not everyone's cup of tea, I can whole heartedly recommend the experience of trying something new to stretch your boundaries. Why not go along to your local riding school and try something new? It could be Western riding, vaulting, polo or whatever you fancy. I say go for it, you have nothing to lose and lots to gain!

Mrs Catherine Baikie, via email



NEW WAY OF THINKING

I have been really enjoying the features by Anna Sallet, in particular 'What your horse does when you're not riding him' in December *H&R*. The series has made me think about everything that my horse does in a totally different way – it has been fascinating. Thanks to Anna, I think I will be getting to know my horse better than I ever thought I would.

Emily Kenna, via email

Horse&Rider thank you...

The sender of our star letter will receive a pair of Toggi Chandler ladies' riding boots, worth £180 – available in sizes 36–43. Classically styled, with a modern twist, these handmade leather boots have a removable shock-absorbing footbed. For more information, visit toggi.com or to find your local stockist, call 0113 2707000 or email info@toggi.com



Toggi

BIG DREAMS

When I was younger, I dreamt of riding and having my own pony, but my parents couldn't afford to pay for regular lessons. I had the occasional lesson and went for a week of riding lessons in the summer holidays to learn about horse management. My childhood came and went, and the dream of having a pony of my own was never realised.

I decided when I was 22 to spend a year working with horses abroad, which not only taught me lots more about having my own horse, but it also made me realise that although I might not have had a pony, I could now buy myself a horse! I came back to the UK and embarked on finding the horse of my dreams. I finally found Horrace after months of searching and he's turned out to be everything I could've hoped for. I'm fulfilling the dreams I've had since I was a child, and I encourage anyone who's ever dreamt of owning their own horse to find a way to make their dreams come true, too.

Sascha Jenkins, via email



RIDING CLUB NEWS



I recently got married and, as a surprise, my friends from Windsor Horse Rangers greeted me at the church with a pony and formed a guard of honour. As kids, we attended Windsor Horse Rangers, a charity for those who want to learn how to look after horses but can't afford their own, and many of us never really left. Now some of us are volunteers at the weekends, and teach the current children riding and stable management.

Much to the confusion and amusement of many of our other wedding guests, the troop lined the entrance to the church in the middle of Windsor in their full parade uniform – many sets had not been worn since we were teenagers, so were a little on the small side. I was so happy to see them there waiting for me to arrive, as we had done it for two other weddings previously and I had always hoped that they would be there for my wedding, too.

Mary Webb, Windsor Horse Rangers

Tell us your Riding Club's latest news and you could win a saddlecloth from KBIS!



Send a clear photo, SAE for its return and your contact details to Riding Club News, *Horse&Rider*, Marlborough House, Headley Road, Grayshott, Surrey GU26 6LG or email georgia@djmurphy.co.uk



@HesterDressage
(International dressage rider, Carl Hester)

Practising piaffe with the peacocks and guinea fow!



Cartoons from the horse's mouth is available to *Horse&Rider* readers at the discounted price of £7.99 (with free p&p). Please call Quiller Publishing 01939 261616 and quote 'H&R' when placing your order.



WHERE DO YOU
READ YOURS?



I read my *Horse&Rider* at every opportunity.

Hester Croyden



In January *Horse&Rider* we learnt that in Iceland some ponies are fed the odd herring. We asked you if you think it's okay for horses to consume anything non-vegan as part of their diet

Sarah Hammond

I resisted putting my mare on a joint supplement that wasn't vegan, but in the end it was in her best interests. She had eaten ham sandwiches before so you can't say it wasn't what she would've wanted...

Catherine Sheppard

I used to know an Exmoor pony who would steal the eggs from under the hens! I don't worry about it too much as I'm sure they pick bits up as they eat naturally.

Peter Callcut

When horses are grazing they probably consume insects all the time, so I can't see the problem.

Katie Coombes

I think it should be avoided if you can, it's not natural for them.

To have your say about the horsey issues of the day, visit facebook.com/HorseandRiderMag

ARIAT

Inspiration of the month

Leanne Shortt thanks her mum for years of generosity, patience and inspiration

My mum, Julie, has always been my horsey inspiration. She learned to ride when she was young and delighted in teaching me and my friends to ride. Despite a gruelling shift pattern as a police officer, she always found time to give us lessons and any spare money she had was spent on things for me or the horses. Sadly my mum's health has deteriorated and she is unable to ride like she used to, but my friend and I convinced her to have a few short rides and it was amazing to see her on a horse again. I want to thank her for being amazingly brave and unselfish in every way, but also to encourage her to keep riding as she inspires me everyday with her courage.



My mum in the middle, supporting my friend, Christina, (left) and I (right) at a show



Tell us why your inspiration deserves this award and they could win a pair of Ariat Berwick Tall GTX boots, worth £349.99.

Send a clear photo, SAE for its return, and contact details for you and your inspiration, to:

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If you want to share your thoughts, send your letters to Georgia Guerin, Letters Editor, *Horse&Rider*, D J Murphy (Publishers) Ltd, Marlborough House, Headley Road, Grayshott, Surrey GU26 6LG, with photos if they're relevant and an SAE for their return, or email georgia@djmurphy.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you!

Articles, photos and drawings welcomed but we cannot be liable for their safe return – enclose an SAE. Every effort is made to ensure that the information and advice contained in all articles is correct and appropriate, but no responsibility for loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action in reliance on or as a result of anything included in or omitted from such articles can be or is accepted by the authors, the publishers, their employees or any other person connected with D J Murphy (Publishers) Ltd. Save as expressly permitted by law, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written authority of D J Murphy (Publishers) Ltd. Copyright D J Murphy (Publishers) Ltd.



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Winter. training

PART
THREE

Introduce some new exercises into your winter schooling plan and you'll not only feel renewed motivation, but your horse will thank you, too. Change it up and see the benefits!

This month's experts



International Grand Prix dressage rider **Anna Ross** reveals the secret to riding the perfect halt.



Dressage trainer **Tania Grantham**'s pole exercise will help you develop collection and extension in your horse's paces.



Dressage rider **Dan Greenwood** has two great exercises to improve straightness, develop collection and help create a level horse.

In the first two parts of our winter training series, top trainers have shared eight simple, effective exercises to improve your horse's way of going and polish your riding, too. This issue, in the last part of the series, we bring you four more ways to correct common faults, improve his paces and refine your technique. Whether you're competitive or focused on improving for the pleasure of it, turn the page to get started! ➤

Dan Greenwood

5 MIN

HINDLEG CONTROL

Learning to control the leg your horse uses to step forward from halt to walk is a great way to prevent him from moving off on the forehand, as well as improving your awareness of his body and how it moves



Our expert

Dan Greenwood

is a dressage rider and trainer. He has won many national championships and ridden for GB at Small Tour, as well as coaching up to Grand Prix.



GREAT FOR...

Improving straightness
Increasing collection and engagement



HOW TO RIDE IT

1. Establish halt.
2. As you ask him to move from halt to walk, ask him to take the first step with his inside hindleg by using your inside leg. Be sure not to release the rein as you do this.
3. It's easiest to do this in an arena with mirrors or with someone on the ground to help. If he steps forward with any leg other than the inside hind, immediately halt again and then repeat the aid.
4. He will learn what you're looking for, so be sure to reward him when he does as you ask.



TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As well as teaching him to step forward in balance, if ridden correctly, this exercise will help to engage his hindquarters. As you close your leg and hold the rein, you're riding him into a closed contact and keeping him straight. This means he might not feel even in both hands, but that's not the point – he must be physically straight as you put the aid on. All this means is that you've compressed him. When you got on there was, for example, 1.5 metres between his hindlegs and his forelegs. As you ride the transition without letting go of the front, his back will lift, his quarters will drop, his hindleg will step through and he will be physically shorter in his base, so he can now carry weight on his hindlegs.

*Dan's
top tip*

Keep your horse level during this exercise. Think to yourself, 'Do I have two ears in front of me, two level shoulders and two hips behind me? Is everything aligned? Am I aligned?'

Dan Greenwood

5 MIN

SHOULDER-IN
CENTRE LINES

This exercise ensures you can ride your horse around either inside leg, and also from both legs into both reins



PROBLEM-SOLVING

Wobbling on the centre line? This happens because you're not riding forward enough and are losing impulsion. Ride more forward to resolve the problem.

Finding it hard? Slowing down doesn't make the exercise easier – once you've lost impulsion, your horse is no longer connected and it's difficult to keep him level. Keep riding forward and it will become easier with practise.

Dan's
top tips

Always attack – think forward through the turn and your horse will push himself into the connection. This makes it much easier.

It's important to practise equally on both reins to work on any imbalance and create an equal horse. This is much better than trying to correct a wobbly horse – focus on making him supple to the left and right, and accepting of your contact on both reins.

For a horse to be straight, he has to be equal on both reins. And if there's a stiffness one way or the other, it will show up on the centre line. Your horse will normally look to his bendy side and hang on the stiffer side.



Our expert

Dan Greenwood

is a dressage rider and trainer. He has won many national championships and ridden for GB at Small

Tour, as well as coaching up to Grand Prix.



GREAT FOR...

Riding perfect centre lines in dressage tests

Horses who are prone to falling in or out

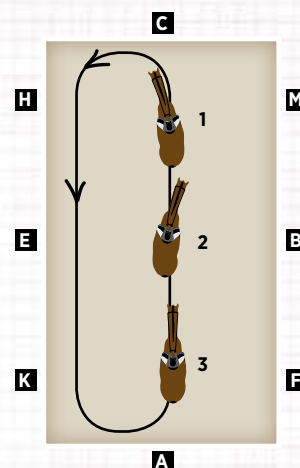
Creating a level horse



HOW TO RIDE IT

1. Warm up as normal.
2. Ride down the centre line in shoulder-in left.
3. At the end, track left.
4. Turn down the centre line again, but this time ride shoulder-in right.
5. Track right at the end.
6. Turn down the centre line, but this time ride straight.

Shoulder-in centre lines



with Tania Grantham



15 MIN

LENGTHEN AND COLLECT OVER POLES



Our expert

Tania Grantham

BHSAI Int SM is a professional dressage rider who, as well as competing, specialises in helping all types

of horse and rider enjoy dressage, making it fun, rewarding and attainable for everyone.

This exercise helps maintain your horse's rhythm and tempo, and the poles help you adjust his stride length – it's a fun way to practise lengthened and collected work



GREAT FOR...

Building strength and flexibility in young horses

Becoming more loose and elastic in your position



HOW TO RIDE IT

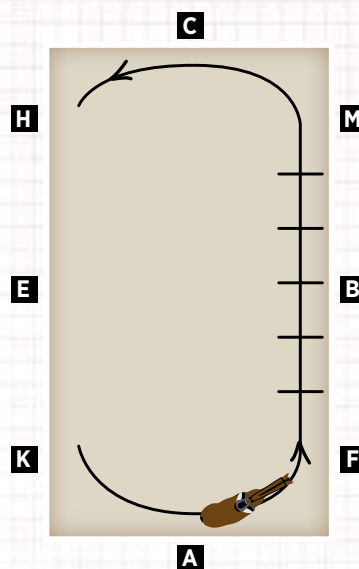
1. Set the poles at normal distance (see my top tips, right).
2. Approach the poles in working trot completely straight and ride down the centre of them.
3. Adjust the poles so they are closer together. Collect his trot, then ride over the poles, maintaining the collection you've created around the arena.
4. Adjust the poles so the distance is greater than normal. Ride forward in a positive trot over the poles. Maintain the lengthened strides after the poles on the straight line.
5. Come back to working or collected trot before the end of the arena.





Ride over the poles in both directions

Lengthen and collect over poles



PROBLEM-SOLVING

Struggling with the change in distance? Make sure adjustments are gradual to help him adapt to what is being asked.

Crooked or falling sideways? Focus on riding forward and straight over the centre of the poles. Use regular half-halts to maintain his attention.

Struggling to collect? Try approaching in sitting trot.



TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Once he is established, vary the distances to build increased collection and extension.

Incorporate downwards transitions before and after the poles. These help generate power in his trot and prevent him falling onto his forehead.

Tania's top tips

Measure the distance between poles using pigeon steps (length of your foot). An average horse's trot stride is 4-5 pigeon steps between poles. If you're unsure, place the poles and trot over them. If he can trot over them easily then the distance is correct.

Begin by adjusting the distance by half a pigeon step in each direction. Once he's finding it easy, you can adjust the poles a bit more – up to two pigeon steps each way.

The poles will help you feel the amount of collection or extension you need.

Anna Ross

5 MIN

PERFECT HALT



Our expert

International Grand Prix dressage rider **Anna Ross** has ridden for Team GB all over the world, most recently with Jane

Sewell's talented mare, Die Callas, with whom she was Reserve for the 2015 European Championships.



Missed any of the series?

Download them all in the *Horse&Rider* app!

If you practise halting square 100% of the time in training, there's an 85% chance you will pull one off in competition. But if you only insist on a square halt in training 85% of the time, the odds of delivering one in competition reduce to 50% with the distractions and atmosphere in the arena. I know what odds I'd prefer as I come down the centre line!



HOW TO RIDE IT

1. Check yourself first – ensure you're sitting straight in the saddle, with level stirrups and an even contact on both reins. If you're uneven, your aids will be unequal and this will affect the halt.
2. Keep an active walk and wrap your leg around his sides. This encourages him to step up from behind into halt, rather than falling onto his forehead.



Anna's top tip

The only correction you should make in halt is a forward step – stepping back in halt is a real fault. At entry-level dressage (Intro or Prelim), it's permissible for the halt to be slightly progressive. The judge would rather see your horse take two balanced steps in walk than to see an abrupt, unbalanced halt direct from trot. Perfecting your ability to halt square is an ideal activity for winter evenings – just make sure your horse has a rug or quarter sheet over his bottom and you are wearing a pair of warm socks! ■



PROBLEM-SOLVING

Mirrors help you see how square you are without having to lean over and look down, or a helper on the ground or another rider can call out which leg is spoiling the picture by saying 'left hind' or 'right fore'.

If your horse swings his quarters in halt, using your imagination is often a suitable cure. Thinking of the feeling of shoulder-fore will help you engage and steer his hindlegs into a straight, square halt.



Last issue: Part 2
More exercises from top trainers

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Staying cool

Jumping is no big deal, assures Olympic legend Sir Mark Todd. It's all about simple exercises to build gymnastic ability, as he shows Horse&Rider

As told to Kelly McCarthy-Maine. Photos: Jon Stroud. With thanks to Sir Mark Todd for his help with this feature. Find out more about this year's International Eventing Forum, internationaleventingforum.com



Exercise 1

Mark begins with two poles on the floor. Approach in trot over the first pole, then half-halt and walk for a few steps before trotting out over the second pole.

Even if you don't intend to jump, working around a scattering of poles and jumps in the arena doesn't hurt. "Jumping is no big deal – make it normal," advises Mark.

"There are two areas I'm always trying to improve when riding and training horses – their gymnastic ability and overall rideability"

Mark advises:

"Work on establishing an even stride first, then you can start to play around. At first you may have to use a bit of hand as you sit up, but eventually the aid for 'wait' will be to sit up. There is an endless variety of exercises you can do with three poles."



Exercise 2

"This is an excellent training exercise for riders – it's up to your horse to organise his feet," explains Sir Mark. "With just three poles on the floor, the best part is nobody will get a fright if you make a mistake," he assures. "This kind of basic rideability training – becoming obedient – cannot be done in front of big fences. That is where you can have a crash and a fright," Mark explains.

Begin with three poles on the floor, two and seven canter strides apart. Once you are able to ride the two and seven strides consistently, start playing with your adjustability...

- Condense the canter to fit three and eight canter strides.
 - Open the canter to fit two and six strides.
 - Make it more difficult and condense for three strides, then open up for six.
 - Next, open for two and condense for eight.
 - Change direction and repeat.
- Hours of fun with only three poles!

"Gymnastic ability improves your horse's balance, technique and strength. Rideability gives you the ability to adjust immediately"

“Teach your horse to jump in a good way, in a nice shape, rather than let him bash himself and jump inverted”



Exercise 3

This exercise only needs one fence – ideally a cross-pole – in the middle of your arena. Ride a figure of eight with the jump in the centre.

Open your inside rein a little over the fence to encourage your horse to land on the correct leg. The circles can be big and open to start with, but the aim is to eventually make them just 10 metres.

“Don’t be tempted to lean – just look, stay in balance over the middle of your horse and open your rein,” Mark explains.

“It may take a few tries to get it right, but with practise you will install the aid that an open rein and looking indicates to your horse in which direction he’s going next.

“Always look where you are going. The sooner you can look and lock on to your fence, the sooner you will see a stride and get a good jump,” Mark explains.

“It’s not just dressage for dressage’s sake, flatwork is directly related to jumping. Don’t just throw away the dressage when it comes to jumping – think of jumping as flatwork with jumps in the way”



Exercise 4

This grid of three fences – all spreads – has a placing pole in front of each jump. Mark’s striding is six-and-a-half metres between the oxers, with a placing pole three metres from the fence.

“I don’t use ground lines in oxers in gymnastic exercises. I want my horse to focus on the front rail,” explains Mark. “This is your opportunity to work on technique – you can put guide rails on the floor or on the fence if he needs help staying straight. But if he starts to struggle, back off. You’ve gone too far,” he explains. ■

“To jump you need a positive canter and the ability to adjust immediately. As a rider, you need to always be thinking about rhythm, balance, control and obedience”

PART THREE *In this feature. . .* ➤ Improve his responsiveness



As told to Charlotte Anderson. Photos: Bob Atkins. For lessons and clinics, ernestdillon-showjumping.co.uk. With thanks to Littleton Manor Equestrian.

Our trainer



Ernest Dillon is a Showjumping Specialist Fellow of the BHS. He's also a UKCC level three Showjumping Coach, an accredited BS Coach, a British Eventing Master Coach and a UKCC Coach Educator. He trains many four-star eventers and international showjumpers, and has competed on the international circuit himself.

Our rider and model



Georgina Wood is 21 and has had lessons with Ernest since she was eight years old. She's eventing at two-star level with her horse.

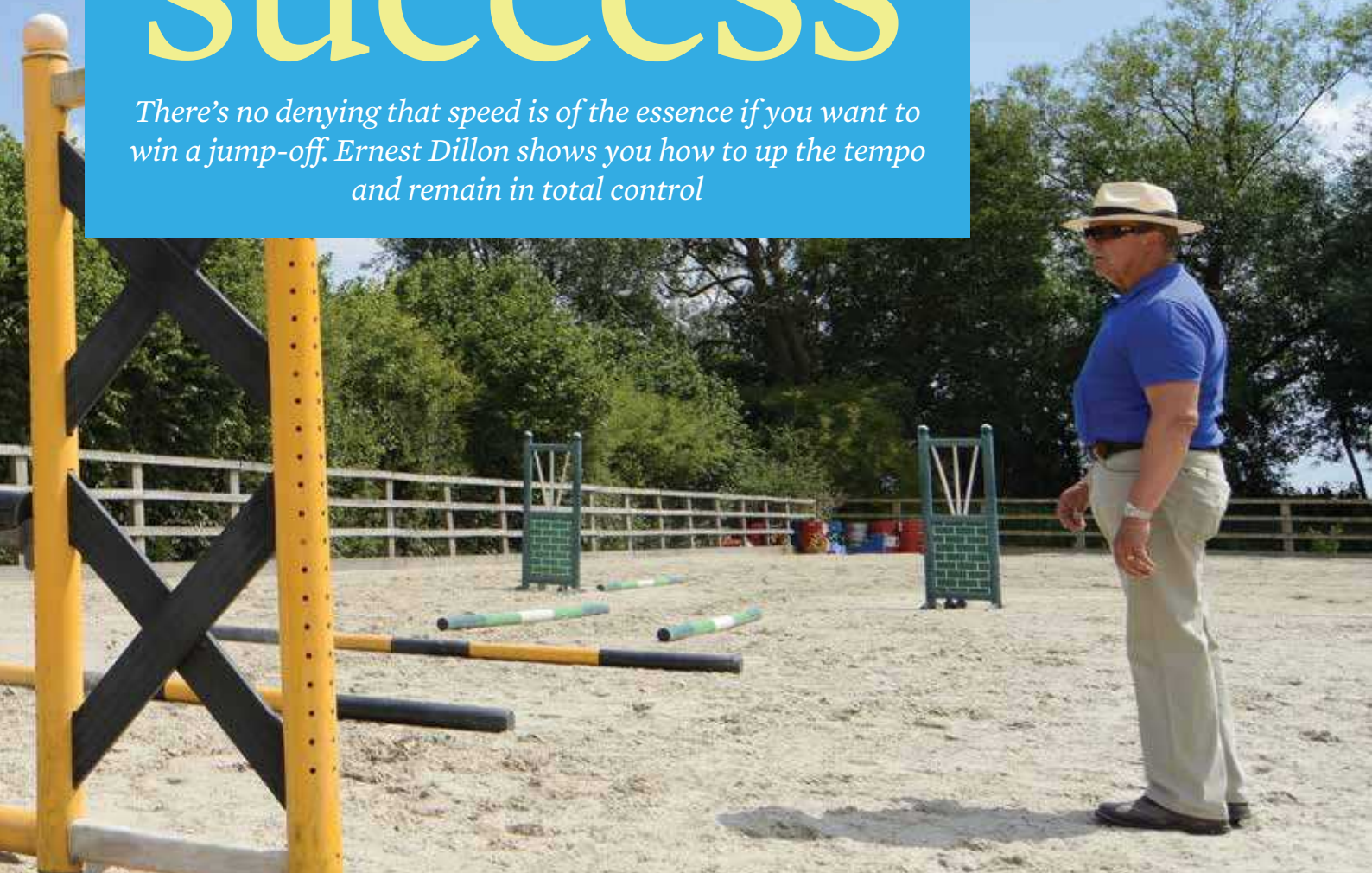
Shadow is seven years old. Georgina has been riding him for six months because his owner has injured her shoulder. He's been doing general Riding Club activities.

► Create an adjustable stride ► Learn to speed up and stay balanced

PART THREE: UPPING THE TEMPO

Jump-off success

There's no denying that speed is of the essence if you want to win a jump-off. Ernest Dillon shows you how to up the tempo and remain in total control



Over the last two issues, I've shown you how to ride tight turns before and after jumps, and how to jump on angles. The third and final component to a successful jump-off is upping the tempo. It sounds simple, but if you want to go faster you actually need to slow down.

If you don't have much jump-off experience, you may be tempted to try to speed up without maintaining balance and rhythm, and end up hauling on the inside

rein to make a tight turn to the next fence. This causes your horse's hindquarters to swing out and, although you might get away with being disorganised occasionally, if you want to consistently win, you need to achieve pace *and* balance. Additionally, the faster you jump, the more likely you are to have a pole down. When a horse gallops, he flattens out and it's harder for him to achieve the lift required to clear substantial fences, so keeping him engaged and off his forehand is vital. ►



Keep him balanced and controlled in all three paces

ERNEST'S PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL RIDING

1. Impulsion works for you, speed works against you
2. Remember that there's a mouth on the end of the reins
3. Your horse's reactions are very quick and he won't slow down for you. It's your job to keep up

Gear changes

Creating an adjustable horse is essential if you want to win in a jump-off. It's most efficient to allow your horse to take bigger strides on landing, then two or three strides from the next fence, compress your horse into a bouncy, elastic canter so that he's ready to take off in a balanced manner. Your aim in the final strides of the approach is to encourage his hindquarters underneath him, so that he has the elasticity needed to clear the jump.

The ability to vary both the length of his stride and the cadence will create an adjustable gait. This adjustability is key to creating an effective showjumper. If your horse doesn't respond quickly to your aids to adjust his stride, you'll be behind those whose horses can change pace within a stride or two.

You can practise making changes to his stride when you're out hacking, not just when you're in the arena. Ask him to go into canter and push him forwards for seven or eight strides, then bring him back quickly with your reins, seat and legs, so he's still in canter but the energy is contained. To begin with, you might find that he reacts to your rein aids by hollowing through his neck and back. You may also find that he reacts equally badly to your leg aids by leaping forwards, but it won't take him long to work out what you're asking of him, so be consistent and persevere. Horses generally try to do what you're asking, so make sure your aids are clear. Ultimately, with practise, he'll be able to alter his pace within a stride or two.

*If you do it right, it's hard
to get it wrong!*

Ernest Dillon

More speed, less haste

Completing a balanced turn at speed requires total control. If he's racing forwards and you're pulling on the reins in an attempt to negotiate a turn, he's likely to fall onto his forehead, which will leave him unable to engage his hindquarters effectively. The aim is to get him to use his inside hindleg to push off around the corners, so that on a short turn he arrives at the fence in the correct position.

It might take a few attempts to get it right

Creating an adjustable horse is necessary if you want to win in a jump-off

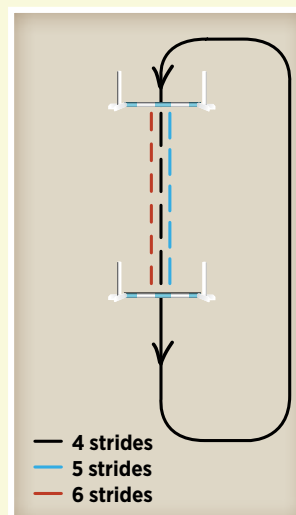


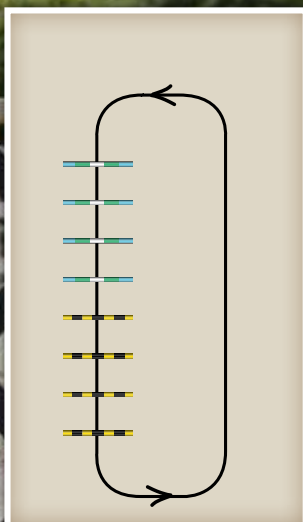
EXERCISE ONE Lengthen and collect

Sometimes it's important to take a stride out to save time. To practise this, start with two poles on the ground five canter strides apart. Canter through on both reins keeping an even rein contact, but allow him to sort his feet out as he approaches the poles. Make any adjustments to his tempo before you approach the first pole. Once he is settled into a rhythm and is consistently making the five strides, push him forwards into a longer, more powerful canter so that the same distance takes only four strides. Allow him to find his balance by sitting quietly in the saddle, but support him with your legs against his sides, keeping your

hands level and maintain a soft contact with his mouth.

The next step is to cover the same distance in six strides. This time you're aiming for a more collected canter with even greater hindlimb engagement. This can be harder for hot-headed horses who like to rush, but this exercise will teach him to be obedient enough to wait. Support his front end with your hands and sit still in the saddle to avoid him falling onto his forehead. If you approach the pole and his stride is not sufficiently collected, don't be afraid to ride a 10-metre circle to achieve the rhythm you want. Ride this exercise the same number of times on both reins. ➔



EXERCISE TWO Pole alley

Sit quietly and support him with your hands

Place eight poles one canter stride apart. To begin with, trot through the poles, allowing your horse to find his stride. Keep a steady contact in case he misjudges the distance between the poles. Pay attention to the way he moves his shoulders and his hindlegs. If he's well co-ordinated and balanced, he'll generate an equal amount of lift at his shoulder as at his hock. It can be hard, especially for young or green horses, to co-ordinate all four legs and it's helpful to ask someone to watch as he



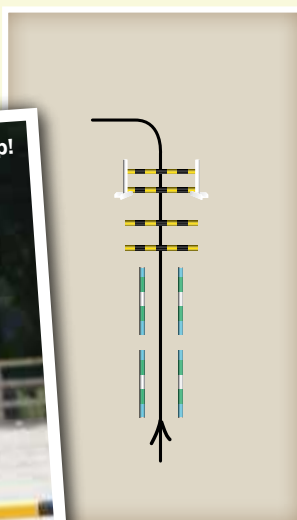
Look at the elevation of his hocks and shoulders

goes through the poles. With practise he'll become more co-ordinated so don't worry if initially he struggles with this exercise.

Once you've ridden through the poles in both directions and he's successfully picking his feet up, it's time to canter. Pick up canter on the outside of the arena and establish an even rhythm before you enter the poles. Keep him collected and support him with your legs and hands. Look up and keep a light seat so that he can maintain his balance even if he misjudges a stride. By riding this exercise first in trot and then in canter, you're teaching him to adjust his stride to suit the course.



Aim for the middle of the jump!

**EXERCISE THREE** Canter poles, jump

Create a channel using four guide poles leading towards two canter poles, followed by a small upright. The guide poles will encourage him to stay straight on the approach to the canter poles and the canter poles will maintain his rhythm. Don't interfere with his pace on the approach. You need to ensure he's got enough impulsion to get over the fence without you having to drive him on over the poles. Set up your pace and help him maintain his rhythm throughout the exercise. If he tries to back off, keep your legs on to keep him balanced and the speed consistent. As before, if you're not happy with his rhythm, circle away and make your approach again once he's balanced and you're in absolute control. Keep your hands steady, your head up and look over the jump. It's a good idea to keep the jump small at first as he may struggle to sort his legs out to begin with. Once he's confident and finding the rhythm manageable, you can raise the jump and make it into an oxer. ■



Missed any of the series?

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Last issue: Part 2
Jump-off tips II: Jumping on an angle

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Go explore!

Wrap up warm and embrace your inner adventurer by treating yourself and your horse to a trip somewhere new

Winter is a fantastic time to do more hacking, as the ground is often soft enough to go a bit faster, beauty spots that are popular with walkers are usually quieter and the British countryside never looks more stunning than on a crisp, frosty morning. However, the daylight hours seriously cramp our style when it comes to riding out at this time of year and, for many of us, the weekend is the only time we can venture out. So why not make the most of this treasured time with your horse and take him somewhere special? Here are a few ideas...

Head to the beach

'In winter?!', I hear you say. But if you want to ride on the beach, it's a lot quieter at this time of year and there are likely to be fewer restrictions as to where and when you can ride on them. Remember to check the tide times before you set off.

Just for fun

Why not consider a fun ride or sponsored ride? Many of them are held on stunning private estates and beautiful land that you wouldn't normally have access to – even Burghley and Badminton – so it's a great opportunity to go somewhere special.

Book a weekend away

Holidays aren't just for the summer. If you fancy getting away from it all and venturing a bit further afield, there are lots of horsey B&Bs that will put up both you and your horse for the night. Many of these are in areas with fantastic riding, too. Specialist riding holiday companies will be able to recommend places to stay and they may also have preplanned routes with B&Bs along the way.

Why not make the most of this treasured time with your horse and take him somewhere special?

Plan a pub ride

Get together with friends at your yard and plan a circular route with a country pub approximately half way, so you can stop for lunch and a drink before riding home. It's a good idea to check out the pub first to ensure there's somewhere safe to tie your horses and that the landlord is happy for you to do this. You might also want to organise for someone to meet you there so they can bring water and hay for the horses, and keep an eye on them while you eat. Remember to carry some baler twine so you can tie up your horse safely.



Top tips

● Worried about going somewhere new because you might get lost? Download the ViewRanger app. It shows all the bridleways, you can see where you are and you can plan a route in advance.



● Before you head off, check there is somewhere safe to park and unload your horse – try a local equestrian centre, riding school or BHS-approved livery yard.

Visit a National Park

There are 15 National Parks spread all over the UK. They are all protected areas with stunning views and landscapes, and hundreds of miles of bridleways. Being a safe haven for rare wildlife, keep a look out for unusual plants and animals en route. ■



PART SIX *In this feature. . .* ► Help him take more weight behind

Our trainer



Paul Friday is an international dressage rider and trainer. He was crowned Prix St Georges Champion at the 2013 British Dressage NAF Five Star Winter Championships. Paul trains, rides and competes up to Grand Prix level.

Our rider



Jezz Palmer is 21 and has ridden for Paul for more than a year.

Our model



Christoph is a 15-year-old, 16.2hh Hanoverian by Cardinar, Paul's 30-year-old stallion. He's currently competing at Small Tour, Prix St Georges.



As told to Charlotte Anderson. Photos: Bob Atkins. With thanks to WeatherBeeta for their help with this feature. weatherbeeta.co.uk

► Prevent him becoming downhill ► Keep him focused and relaxed

△ Create an uphill horse

Create balance, presence and self-carriage by making your horse uphill. Dressage rider Paul Friday shows you how

A riderless horse will carry approximately two-thirds of his bodyweight on his forelegs. Add the weight of a rider positioned closer to the front than the back and it's easy to understand why horses can sometimes look like they're being ridden downhill, into the ground, which is also known as being on the forehand. When you watch professional riders, their horses appear to have their weight equally distributed between their front and back legs. In top level competition, it's desirable for even more of their weight to be on their back end for complex movements such as canter pirouettes. The good news is that it's possible, through training, to make a naturally downhill horse more expressive with his shoulders, which instantly makes him look more uphill. ►

Qualities of an uphill horse

An uphill horse will...

- feel light in your hands
- be easier to ride
- feel supple and mobile
- find exercises easier
- be able to bring his hindleg underneath himself
- become more balanced
- find his work less strenuous on his joints

Identifying that he's downhill

He's likely to be downhill if...

- his footfall seems heavy
- he feels heavy in your hands
- he's tense in his frame and neck
- he's strong on one side
- he feels like he wants to run away from you
- he's difficult to control



An uphill struggle

To make sure he's uphill, you need to ensure he's **taking his weight behind** and **developing expressive paces**.

It's important to find the rhythm that suits your horse and make adjustments within his natural pace. If you want to make him more uphill, look for tempo and energy in his paces. Without them, you're not able to make him adjustable and you're more likely to throw his balance out.

It's not unusual for riders to try to slow their horse too much in an attempt to encourage him to carry more of his weight on his hindlegs. If he carries you forward with impulsion, it's a sign that he's happy being forward within the pace, and if you slow him too much, you'll unbalance him and he's likely to end up even more on the forehand.



Focus his energy

A good-quality walk can be difficult for some horses and, invariably, if they struggle with it they're likely to lose focus and become tense. If your horse becomes tight, can't track up, or is stiff through his back during the beginning of a test or training session, he'll find it hard to relax. To prevent this happening, encourage your horse forward into trot or canter, and allow him to get loose, focused, confident and relaxed before asking him to produce any controlled walk work. It's important that he stays loose through his back so that he can take the weight effectively on his hindquarters.

On the up and up

It's easier for your horse to produce a quality canter on a 10-metre circle than on the straight, due to the slight bend through his body and the direction of travel. Use your warm up to get him moving in circles, engaging his hindlegs so that when you ask him to go straight, you'll have a much better quality canter.

You won't be able to encourage him to become more uphill if he's behind your leg. Make sure he's in front of your leg by riding lots of transitions. Look at his ears and his neck to ensure he's straight and up in front. Vary between a competition frame – where he's compact with his poll as the highest point – and a training frame – where he's a little bit lower in the head carriage – to check that he's not relying on you to hold him up, which would indicate that he's heading downhill.

Making a naturally downhill horse more expressive with his shoulders instantly makes him look more uphill

Top tip

Throughout all these exercises, using a half-halt can help lighten his forehand and improve control. To ride one, make sure he stays in front of your leg, close your fingers on the reins and then release. Be careful not to slow him too much, however, as it can upset his natural rhythm.

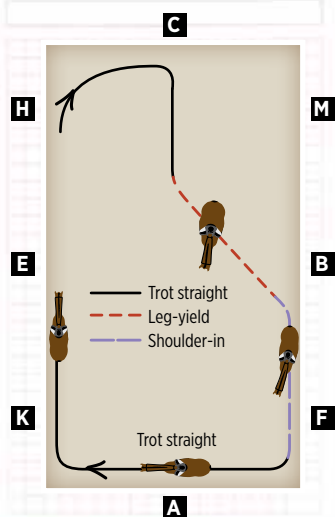


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Lateral to lift

In trot, leg-yield from the centre line to the outside track. Continue trotting straight along the long side for a few strides, then ride shoulder-in until you reach the corner. After the corner, trot straight again.

This exercise will encourage your horse to engage his hindlegs and accept your outside rein. This has the effect of making him lighter through his shoulders, so when you ride straight at the end of the exercise, he'll be in front of your leg. By only performing a short section of each movement – leg-yield and shoulder-in – you will keep him light and active.



Objectives

- Encourage him to activate his hindquarters
- Make him feel lighter through his shoulders
- Bring him in front of your leg

Top tip

Gently touching your horse on the top of his bottom with your schooling whip encourages him to lift his hocks, rather than using too much leg aid.



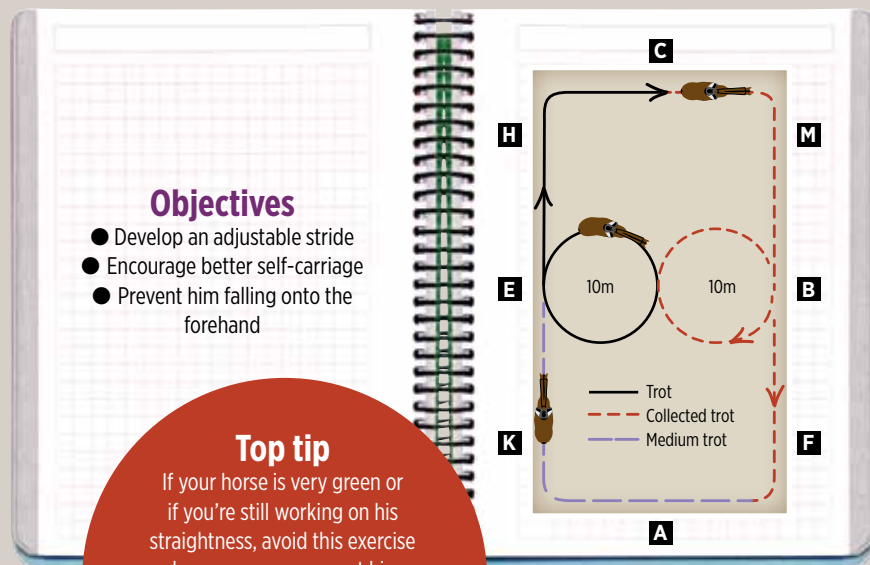
Extend and collect

If your horse is already quite established with his flatwork, play with his paces to encourage him to propel himself forward, then come back to a slower, more collected gait. You can vary the speed of his pace over a few strides and, as he gets stronger, ask him to maintain a faster or slower pace for a longer period of time, without falling onto his forehand. This exercise is better performed on the track because it'll help keep him balanced.

Start by establishing his rhythm in trot from E to C. From C to B, compress his stride while maintaining an uphill carriage. At B, you can check and rebalance him by riding a 10-metre circle and then pick the same, condensed pace up from B to F. At the corner, ask him to power forward to E where, if necessary, you can ride another 10-metre circle to rebalance him.

When you come back to the collected pace, keep the contact soft and ensure he's not leaning onto the bit. This tells you that he is remaining in self-carriage.

As well as shortening and lengthening his strides, you can play with the tempo of his paces, too. Upping the cadence of his footfall will remind him to be responsive and keep him interested in his work.



Objectives

- Develop an adjustable stride
- Encourage better self-carriage
- Prevent him falling onto the forehand

Top tip

If your horse is very green or if you're still working on his straightness, avoid this exercise because you can upset his natural rhythm. Instead, use lots of transitions, focusing on keeping him light in the reins and responsive to your leg aids.



Lengthened strides

Your aim is to increase lift and ground cover. To achieve this, push him on with your legs and then relax them, so he knows that he can move forwards. Keep your outside rein consistent, too – don't give it away.

You'll feel activity throughout his body, like you're being thrown upwards from the saddle a little bit more than normal with the power from his stride. He should grow through his withers and shoulders. Avoid pushing him too far out of his usual pace, because you'll push him out of balance.



Shortened strides

To shorten his stride, sit back a little bit and deep into the saddle. Use the inside rein to soften him, and prevent him tensing and tightening through his neck. You're aiming for a feeling of compression while still remaining relaxed. He'll cover less ground, but you are still aiming for him to stay high through his shoulders and not fall onto his forehand, and the rhythm shouldn't change.



Problem: He hollows and resists

If you bring him back to a steadier pace and he hollows through his back, ride a 10-metre circle in his normal rhythm to encourage him to relax again. He should feel loose in his frame, stay in the contact consistently, and keep the rhythm, balance, lift and cadence in the stride. If he doesn't feel like he's got those elements, ride a circle and try again.

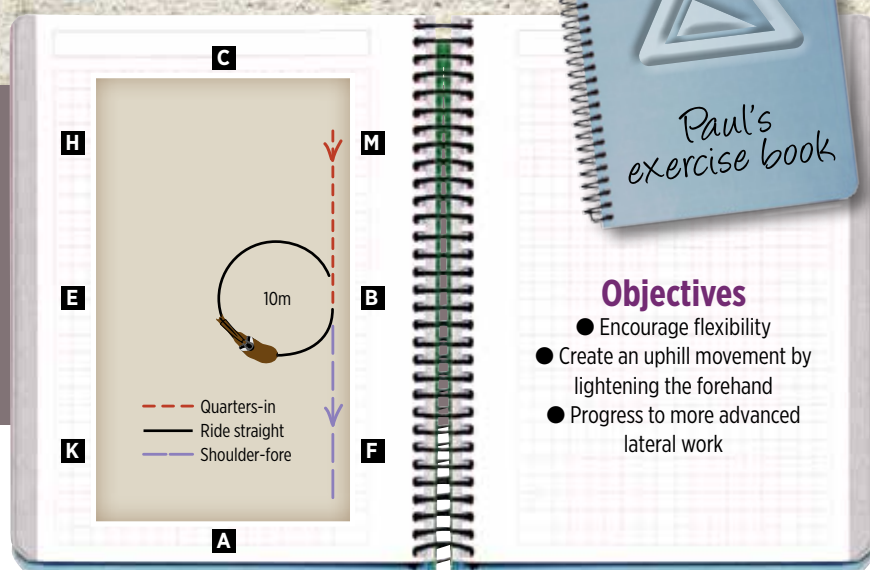
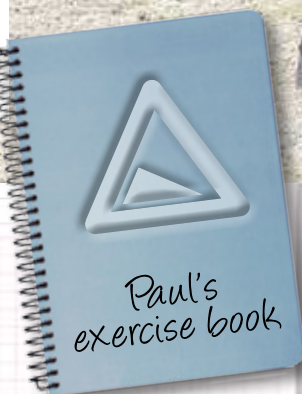
Watch out for his quarters leading his shoulders when performing the quarters-in



Quarters-in to shoulder-fore

Pick up canter, ensuring that he's balanced and responsive. Ride quarters-in from M to B. At B, straighten his body and ride a 10-metre circle in canter. Then ride shoulder-fore from B to F, concentrating on achieving a more uphill canter. Using quarters-in in the canter encourages his hindlegs underneath his body and flexion to the inside.

To make this exercise harder for a more experienced horse, ride travers from M to B and ride shoulder-in on the 10-metre circle. However, watch out for his quarters overtaking his shoulders when performing the quarters-in. If he starts to sidestep, his quarters start to come onto the inside track or he begins to tighten up, ride straight and repeat the circle. Make sure he maintains his rhythm and stays loose or you'll lose the quality of his canter.



Objectives

- Encourage flexibility
- Create an uphill movement by lightening the forehead
- Progress to more advanced lateral work

Today's lesson covered...

- ☑ Creating an adjustable stride
- ☑ Improving his balance
- ☑ Developing better hindleg engagement
- ☑ Readjusting the balance of a downhill horse
- ☑ Developing better expression and extravagance from his shoulders ■



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Photos: Bob Atkins



Happier hacking

Follow Anna Saillet's advice to create a confident horse who loves hacking as much as you do



Our expert



Anna Sallet is an Equine Behaviour Consultant. She gained a BSc (Hons) in Animal Behaviour from Liverpool University, and an MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare from Newcastle University, in which she specialised in equine behaviour. She has competed in dressage, showjumping and eventing.

Hacking out has many physical and psychological benefits for you and your horse. Given the freedom to do so, horses will roam many miles every day, but the way we keep them limits how much they can perform this behaviour. Through hacking out you can provide your horse with an opportunity to travel further than he can in his field and also offer him excellent mental stimulation. Plus, there's nothing better than going for a hack with your horse, riding through beautiful countryside and feeling the wind on your face as you let some steam off with a good old canter.

However, if your horse is tricky to hack out, you

can both lose your confidence surprisingly quickly. There are four main challenges that you might face when hacking out...

1. **Hacking alone** is a very alien concept for your horse and can lead to separation anxiety.
2. Encountering **strange or spooky objects** and negotiating them safely isn't always easy.
3. Dealing with **loose dogs** if your horse isn't used to them can be pretty daunting.
4. Some horses find vehicles, in particular **large machinery and lorries**, very unnerving.

The good news is that there are lots of ways you can improve your horse's confidence so that hacking nightmares become a thing of the past. ➤



Remember

Many of the things your horse does are normal, even though you may find them irritating or frustrating, and this is a really important point to remember during every interaction. This isn't to say that your horse can't be trained to do the things you would like him to, but you do need to bear in mind that just because you want your horse to do something, it doesn't mean that it is easy and stress-free for him.

Bad behaviour?

Horses who nap, spin, spook or bolt out hacking are often labelled as naughty or taking the mickey, but all these behaviours are your horse's attempts to communicate to you that he is unhappy with what is being asked of him. As with any problematic behaviour, it is essential to rule out pain as the cause, so always ask your vet to give your horse a full examination before attempting any retraining. If there is an underlying, undetected pain issue, all retraining efforts will be in vain without the painful condition first being fully resolved.

Providing you have explored all pain-related avenues with your vet, physio and saddler, it's time to consider the psychological reasons that your horse is displaying these behaviours and put in place some techniques to help build his confidence. These extreme avoidance behaviours are your horse's last-ditch way of telling you that he is uncomfortable with a situation, so you will need to take his retraining slowly and be patient as he rebuilds his confidence with hacking out.

Going it alone

Many of us hack out alone, either because necessity dictates it due to location or differences in our routines to others at the yard, or because our horses are difficult to manage when hacked out with others. Regardless of the reason behind it, it's important to remember how unnatural it is for your horse to be without horsey company. As a social herd animal, your horse naturally relies on safety in numbers. Each member of the herd plays an important role in detecting any potential danger, and group members rely on one another to be extra ears and eyes. When you take him away from his companions, he is likely to become alert and vigilant because there is no longer

anyone else keeping an eye out for him. This is perfectly normal behaviour, so don't reprimand him for it.

When training a young or inexperienced horse, or hacking out in an area new to your horse, always go with another equine companion to reduce how stressful he will find the new experience. When you begin to teach him to hack alone, a good halfway point from having an equine companion to being completely without company is to ask a friend to walk alongside you to offer additional support and confidence to him. This can provide him with the reassurance he needs. However, for some horses it's not this easy – you need to be on the lookout for signs of separation anxiety (see box, right).





Spotting separation anxiety

If your horse repeatedly whinnies during hacks or becomes agitated, jogs and sweats up, this indicates that he is anxious and may be due to being separated from his companions. Many horses suffer from separation anxiety, and it's a complex condition that requires careful management and training. If your horse suffers from separation anxiety, enlist the help of a qualified equine behaviour consultant to help you to overcome the problem, because without appropriate treatment the problem can escalate rather than improve over time.

If your horse suffers from separation anxiety, hack out with a companion to provide you and him with additional safety and also to help him feel more secure in his surroundings. The tips I show you in this feature will help you build his confidence steadily over time to help him feel less worried about hacking alone.



When your horse becomes more confident with various novel objects, start moving them around to make them a bit more 'scary' and continue rewarding him for positive behaviours. This will encourage him to become confident and inquisitive, making him much safer when you ride out

Banish his worries

Hacking out safely requires your horse to be confident in different situations and when faced with an array of stimuli. Training for this can be done at home by introducing him to as many novel objects as possible and by regularly changing their location.

Begin this process in your horse's paddock or with him turned loose in an arena before moving on to working under saddle. Your imagination is the only limit when it comes to introducing your horse to novel objects and environments – the wilder your imagination, the more confident and less spooky your horse will become.

When you first put a novel object into your horse's field, ensure that he has plenty of space

to run away from it if he wants to, so that he can approach and retreat in his own time. It is absolutely essential not to force him to investigate the new objects as this could increase his fear rather than boost his confidence. Each horse is a unique individual and his responses to bizarre,

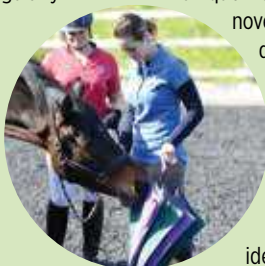
novel objects in his environment will vary depending on his personality. More gregarious, playful horses may go immediately to investigate the object, while more anxious, cautious types may take much longer until they approach the object and many may actively avoid it for some time. Some ideas of novel objects that you could use to develop your horse's confidence include...

- Yoga balls
- Cones
- Bunting

- Flags
- Plastic bags or high-vis vests on poles
- Balloons
- Jump fillers
- Large soft toys

Make use of whatever you have available. Jump wings, fillers and dressage markers can be organised in unusual ways that will make them seem new to your horse. When an object has been left *in situ* for a long time, it becomes part of the furniture and loses its novelty. Once your horse no longer reacts to the object with concern or interest, it's time to change it for something else.

When you've given your horse lots of different objects to investigate in his field, you can then start to introduce similar things while you're riding. Always start off with easier, static objects before advancing onto the more scary, floppy ones. ➤



Be a supportive rider

It is just as important to allow your horse time to investigate these new things under saddle as it was when he was loose. Never force him to go up to something or past an object that he is concerned about. Remember, your aim is to increase his confidence and kicking or hitting him, or even shouting at him to make him go forwards is just likely to further increase his anxiety, causing him to develop negative associations with going past scary objects.

It can be tempting to try to force your horse past something that he's finding scary, but put yourself in his shoes. You're about to go upstairs when you spot a big spider sitting on them. Is it going to make you feel better or worse about the situation if someone stands behind you, yelling at you not to be so stupid and then starts hitting you with a stick, shoving you towards the spider? The chances are you may scoot past the spider because you felt you had no choice, but how would you feel emotionally? The likelihood is that next time you find a spider on the stairs you will desperately hope that same person isn't around, and if they are then your anxiety levels will probably dramatically increase and you may even start to panic much sooner than you had the previous time.

Just because you are able to force your horse to go past something doesn't mean that it's the right thing to do. It won't help his general confidence levels and it certainly won't do your relationship with him any favours. By allowing him

time to investigate the object at will and rewarding him when he approaches it voluntarily, he will learn that there is nothing to fear when faced with unusual objects. If he wants to move away from the object, allow him to do so. If this means that for a short while you need to work him in only one end of the field or arena, don't worry. As he begins to settle and realise that there is nothing to fear, his confidence and curiosity will increase and you will gradually be able to work closer and closer to it.

By training in this way without forcing him to approach potentially frightening objects, you will find that he will later approach and pass scary obstacles much more confidently. He will also trust you more because you have not damaged your relationship by using force. When your horse can confidently negotiate scary obstacles in a safe place, such as the arena, you are ready to move on to going out to meet real-life obstacles. Remember that it will still take time to build up his confidence out hacking, but you can be safe in the knowledge that he trusts you and has developed the ability to process how to deal with unknown objects, meaning he is much more likely to cope when out in the real world.

All of this work at home will mean that you have a much more confident horse than if you hadn't used these important training steps and the result is safer, more enjoyable hacking for everyone, two- and four-legged. The next step is to progress to riding out, building on your training.

Just because you are able to force your horse to go past something doesn't mean that it's the right thing to do. It won't help his general confidence levels and it certainly won't do your relationship with him any favours



Top tip

Ensure you're in the right frame of mind when working with your horse. It's important that you remain relaxed, because he will pick up on any tension.

Introducing your horse to novel objects in a controlled, safe environment with a kind, rewarding approach will help to improve his overall confidence levels

Canine company

You've probably experienced a hack where, out of nowhere, a loose dog has come hurtling towards you. And while some horses are completely accustomed to dogs and show no signs of being afraid, others react very strongly to the perceived threat of a loose dog.

Equipping your horse to understand that dogs don't pose a threat will make hacking out safer for both of you, and there are ways to prepare him for this situation that will enable him to remain as calm as possible.

The first thing to do is enlist the help of a friend with well-trained dogs who are used to being

around horses. Begin by introducing your horse to the dogs in a secure, calm, controlled environment. This should be started by walking the dogs on leads at a safe distance from your horse. If he remains calm and comfortable, the distance can be reduced so that the dogs are slightly closer to him. Keep rewarding your horse, either through the use of verbal praise, scratches on the wither or food rewards. The dogs can also be provided with treats for good behaviour as this will encourage them to develop greater confidence around horses, too.

When you can walk the dogs on leads past your horse in both directions with him remaining calm and relaxed, provided the dogs are well-behaved around horses, you can begin to work with the dogs off the lead. At this stage you should extend the distance between your horse and the dogs again, so that they are far enough away to not startle him. They can be encouraged to behave normally and

to play with toys, so that as you ride your horse up and down he can become used to them moving around erratically while at a safe distance.

Continue to reward your horse for remaining calm while the dogs are some distance away and when he is completely relaxed about the dogs running around at a large distance from him, the dogs can move slightly closer. This can be repeated, gradually shortening the distance between your horse and the dogs, ensuring that he is relaxed before the dogs are allowed to move closer again. By following this procedure over a number of sessions, your horse will become more confident about dogs running around, so if you find yourself in the scary situation of being approached by loose dogs, you can be confident that he will be able to remain calm and is less likely to panic.

Top tip

Don't use dogs who are reactive around horses to train your horse – they must be calm and relaxed in your horse's company.



How to deal with a scary situation out on a hack

Inevitably there will be times when you come across something new and scary on a hack, and even if you have provided your horse with the best training possible, he is still a living, breathing, feeling creature who can become startled or frightened.

If your horse becomes worried by something you come across on a hack, the best line of approach is to allow him plenty of time to have a look at the object and not try to push him forwards too quickly. Most horses simply need time and reassurance to help them to move past scary-looking obstacles. Allow him time to stand still, look and breathe, and don't forget to keep breathing calmly yourself, too! Remember that your horse's ability

to pick up subtle differences in your behaviour mean that if he feels you tense up and your heart rate increase, he will become more concerned. Concentrating on keeping yourself calm in difficult situations when out and about is an important priority to help your horse calm down quickly and easily.

There is often debate about what the correct thing to do is when you encounter a problem on a hack – should you carry on riding or get off and lead? People can become very divided over this, but the truth is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Some people feel safer in the saddle while others feel happier once their feet are on solid ground. The important thing is to do what you feel is safest, regardless of what anyone else

says. Whatever choice you make, focus on staying calm so that your horse can see that there is nothing to be afraid of.

When your horse does start to move forwards past the obstacle, be sure to provide lots of praise and rewards in either the form of food or wither scratches. Be careful not to start frantically patting him – despite this being something that many horse people do, there is nothing pleasant for your horse in being repeatedly slapped on the neck and, in a frightening situation, this may frighten him even more. He is more likely to thank you for an enjoyable scratch or a tasty morsel to eat, and research has shown that the act of chewing and receiving wither scratches can help to lower your horse's heart rate. ➤

Getting to grips with traffic

Very few of us are lucky enough to never encounter traffic when out riding. Helping your horse to become accustomed to vehicles should be done before you leave the safety of the yard. When introducing your horse to vehicles, you should follow the gradual process of shaping to help him gain confidence in these situations.

Begin in a safe area at home where he can see a vehicle at a distance and the vehicle can be stationary but with the engine running. Walk your horse up and down at a distance where he is interested but confident. Gradually decrease the distance between your horse and the car as you are walking up and down, and remember to reward him while he remains calm and relaxed. When you have finally decreased the distance enough that he can touch the car, allow him to do so if he chooses to, encouraging and praising him for looking towards and sniffing the car before moving on again.

Next you are ready for a friend to start slowly driving the car as you can walk towards it, but with a gap between you that's large enough for your horse not to become spooked at all. Again, as you near and pass the car, reward your horse for his calm behaviour. Over several days, work on this process so that you can decrease the

distance between you, until the car is passing you at the same proximity as it would in a normal road situation.

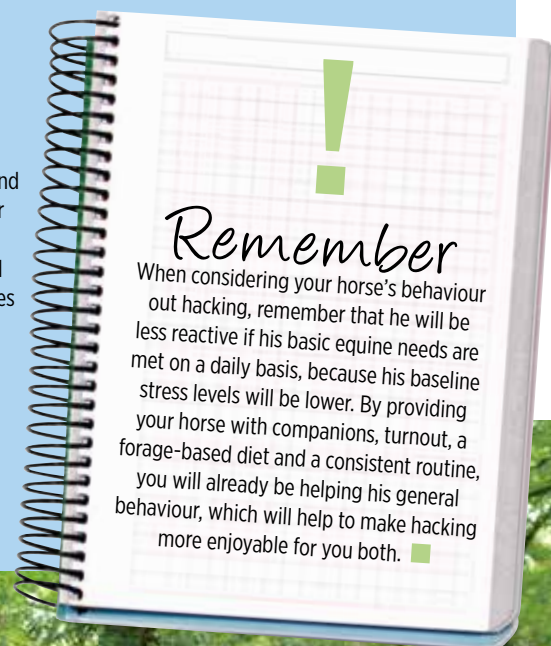
While your horse is getting used to the vehicle, always have the car approach from the front. When you feel he is confident enough to have the car approach from behind, remember to go back to starting with a larger distance between your horse and the car, and gradually reduce this distance only when he is confident at each stage. If he becomes anxious at any stage of the process, simply go back a couple of steps to something that he found easy and start again, working through the stages more gradually than you did previously.

Only when your horse is confident with the car approaching closely from in front and behind should you then introduce an increase in the speed that the car is travelling and different types of vehicles, too. Remember that every vehicle will sound different to a horse, so just because he is confident with one car doesn't mean he will necessarily be okay with every vehicle – the more different colours, makes and models of vehicle that you can involve in your initial training, the better.

The most important thing to keep in mind during your training is that we want our horses to think of vehicles as something positive so that they remain calm and relaxed around them, so the more positive experiences we can provide for them in a controlled setting, the more likely they are to become safe in traffic. Every horse is an individual, so the time spent on training can vary greatly. The most important thing to remember to ensure

success is to allow your horse to dictate the speed of the training – if he starts to become anxious or tense, you may be proceeding too quickly, so just slow the process down so that he remains comfortable and confident.

If you are unsure how your horse will react to farm machinery and lorries, approach a local farmer and ask whether they would allow you to bring your horse to their farm as part of his training. Repeat the same process as with the cars, remembering to reward him for any calm, confident behaviours around the machinery. If you have a companion horse who is confident with vehicles and machinery, take him along with you to help to minimise your horse's stress levels.



Hacking with a calm, confident companion can help your horse to be more relaxed and makes hacking safer, too



You will love how simple making a claim with SEIB can be – just ask Donna.

Donna is responsible for the Equine Claims Team at SEIB. When Donna was not at work, she would always be found riding her pride and joy AJ. Donna owned AJ from a youngster and brought him on, one could go as far to say they were inseparable. Donna has a keen interest in animal welfare and is an English Trec Champion.

Sadly, Donna lost her beloved AJ to Colic after they had been together for 14 years, so she really understands how you feel when you come to make a claim.

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Explore his sensitive. side

Some horses are more sensitive than others. Farah DeJohette explains what to look for and how you can teach your horse to be less reactive

As told to Georgia Guern. Photos: Bob Atkins. With thanks to Farah DeJohette for her help with this feature, fdhorsemanship.com



► Work out what he's trying to tell you ► Teach him to be less reactive

Some horses are so sensitive and reactive that it can get in the way of all the fun things that you want to do. Those who make less of a fuss can still be irritated, but this can often be overlooked. Does your horse ever pull a face at something you do or twitch when you touch a certain spot? Has he done it more than once? Do you ever stop and really think about why he does it? Horses talk to us all the time but, because we don't always understand, we don't always respond. In this feature, I will help you work out what your horse is trying to tell you. ►

Our expert



Farah DeJohette is an American trainer who has developed her own method of horsemanship that includes liberty work, in-hand training and training under saddle. Her experience spans many disciplines and she has trained to a high level in dressage.

Our models



Catherine Myres owns CJ, a 16-year-old gelding. Together they enjoy hacking and hunting.



Playing detective

Before working with a horse, I like to get a full picture of what his day-to-day life is like, and how he behaves in his field and stable, on the yard and while he's working. I like to know how he feels about things. Allow your horse to express his opinion because you need to know if there is something bothering him, if he's finding something difficult or if he's getting tired. When you're trying to solve a problem, don't discount anything he tells you. Consider every reaction he gives you from when you enter his space, including how he responds when you apply pressure to different areas of his body, whether you're on the ground or riding, and if there are any patterns.

From spending some time with CJ, assessing him and talking to his owner, Catherine, I discovered that he is very touch sensitive. I noticed that he doesn't like having his tummy touched and Catherine explained that he doesn't like having his girth done up, which is a big flag for me. Although she confirmed that his saddle fit is regularly checked, CJ should be checked by his vet for possible physical problems. Catherine explained that she rarely has a problem with CJ, but despite him normally being a very careful jumper, he consistently refuses at brush fences. Because of his touch sensitivity, it's

TOP TIP

Be aware that your horse may react and may even kick out, so stand in a place where you're out of range. Don't correct him, simply take note.

Run your hands over his body, watching for his response

possible that he is trying to avoid the brushing of the fence on his belly.

To check if your horse is sensitive, approach him cautiously and watch his body language for clues. Pay particular attention to any head gestures and twitching. Run your hands over his body, watching his expression as you do so. If he reacts to a trigger, as owners we need to work out what he wants to tell us. Notice what he's doing and when – is it related to what you're doing? If he's looking back at where you are touching him, then he's trying to point it out. Determine whether he's more reactive on one side than the other because this can help you to build a bigger picture. Similarly, don't assume that only one area of his body is sensitive.

Making the change

If your horse is sensitive to touch and it's preventing you from doing certain things such as grooming him or jumping brush fences, like CJ, don't worry because you can teach your horse to be less reactive. If your vet has checked your horse and you're sure that he is not reacting to your touch because he is experiencing discomfort, you can begin to desensitise him. Before you start, remember not to assume that your horse is going to be okay with anything – you don't know how he will react and don't take it for granted that he is generally accepting of most things you ask.

To begin desensitisation, start off by gently stroking your horse with something soft, like a leg or tail bandage, in an area that he is not sensitive. Don't forget to let him look at it first. Then move towards his sensitive spot – in CJ's case, it was his girth area. Checking that your horse is happy first, tie a bandage around his barrel, similar to if you were teaching a youngster to accept the girth. Tie it

loosely so that it's in contact with your horse, but is not applying pressure, because you want to be able to take it off quickly if he panics. The contact from the bandage produces a positive chemical response from the body and will make him more aware of his own body, improving his proprioception.

You can use the bandages to wrap your horse in many different configurations – for example, wrapping around your horse's hind end increases his awareness of his front end being connected to his hind end. This configuration will also help him to track up better. Be careful bringing it over his hind end and read his signals as you do so. Allow him to feel the sensation on his body.

Whatever configuration you choose to use, when walking your horse around in-hand with the wraps on, be mindful that he might be surprised by the feeling. You can fit the bandages over tack and warm him up with them on, but introduce it slowly because he will be using different muscles and may tire quickly.



Recreate the sensation with another object



Recreate the sensation

When your horse is okay with the feeling of the bandages, you can progress to an object that closely mimics whatever your horse showed objection to. With CJ we used a leafy branch to simulate the sensation he would feel if he jumped a brush fence.

Like before, start in an area where your horse is not sensitive. Each time you brush your horse with the branch or other object, give him a treat and when he stops twitching, you can take the branch away. This creates a lesson for him to learn and he will begin to associate being stroked by the object with receiving a treat. Touch him with the object all over, rewarding him as you do so.

If he gives you a really strong negative reaction to being brushed with the object, give him treats when he allows you to approach and he will gradually let you closer. When he lets you brush him, progress slowly and don't move on until he is relaxed and comfortable with it.

TOP TIP

If your horse dislikes the feeling of the branch or other object that you've chosen, then you can try using something else that he is more accepting of to start with and work your way back up.

Being positive

Rewarding your horse for participating willingly in an exercise is known as positive reinforcement. It's called positive reinforcement because you're adding something positive to the situation to create a reward and pleasant experience. Giving him a treat helps him to understand a desired behaviour change.

Going forward

Eventually, you will be able to wean your horse off the treats and, while he might never become totally non-reactive, hopefully he will be able to tolerate more than he did because he understands it's okay now. However, never stop listening to your horse when he's expressing his opinion because he might just be trying to tell you that there's something not quite right. ■



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Next issue: Part 3
Teach your horse to be less bargey.



Take a friend who you trust, and whose horse can go either first or last, to help build your confidence.

Safety equipment such as an air jacket and a body protector can make you feel more confident

Put a tag on your horse's saddle with your name and phone number, and another emergency contact. If you become parted, it makes identifying and returning him to you much easier.

Choose a day that's rainy. The ground may be wet, but you're unlikely to meet many other people.



Flying solo

with confidence



Follow the H&R guide to conquering cantering alone in open spaces

Whether you're getting to know a new horse or you've had a bad experience in the past, cantering or galloping in open spaces can be daunting. Sitting on a runaway horse is both petrifying and

dangerous and, if you don't know him well, your first canter in the open can be a nerve-racking journey into the unknown. However, there are ways to minimise the risks and boost your confidence. Once you've had a few good experiences, it'll become easier to trust your horse and, most importantly, enjoy yourself.

Take the wind out of his sails a little by lungeing him or riding in the school before you plan to take him for a canter in the open.

Don't clip him the day before because it will make him feel extra fresh.



Think of a place you'd like to canter, and trot it on several hacks. Then, when you both feel relaxed, slip into canter with no fuss.

Consider a different bit to your normal schooling one. It doesn't need to be more severe, but a different action can often result in him responding more quickly

Avoid cantering towards home.

Never canter towards a road, no matter how well you know your horse. If he bolts he could cause an accident.



Practise at home in a field first. Start by trotting a circle, then slip into canter for a few circuits so that he thinks he's going to continue on the circle. You can gradually start expanding the circle and if it's going well, you can follow the perimeter of the field.



Sing to yourself or talk to him as if you were chatting to a friend on a hack. It will relax him and stop you focusing so much on your nerves.

A running martingale will reduce the risk of him stepping on the reins if you do become separated

Practise your transitions and check your brakes in areas that are more enclosed – for example, wooded bridleways. Once you trust him in an enclosed space, you'll feel more confident in the open.



Not only is trotting a good way to warm him up, it's also a good way to take the edge off his excitement.



There's a difference between being so relaxed that you're unprepared for something to go wrong and being so tense that your stress levels rub off on your horse and make him worried. Don't forget to breathe!

Always tell someone where you're planning to ride and what time you expect to be back.

Shorten your stirrup leathers by at least one hole to give you slightly more control and fit a breastplate or neck strap to give you something to hold on to

Don't choose a windy day. Some horses get excited with the wind under their tail.

If possible, choose an uphill slope. It'll lessen the effect of any acrobatics and he's likely to be tired by the time he reaches the top. Alternatively, ask a farmer if you can ride around an enclosed stubble field – you'll have lots of space but be enclosed, too. ■

Avoid cantering in the same place each time as he'll begin to anticipate it.

Don't underestimate the power of keeping a positive mental attitude. Prepare for the worst, but hope for the best.



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Catherine Bell is an equine behaviourist and helps to co-ordinate the Equine Behaviour and Training Association.



Lucinda Fredericks has won Burghley, Kentucky and Badminton. She is also coach to the Hong Kong eventing team.



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Q&A

MANAGEMENT KNOW-HOW

OUR EXPERTS



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Caroline Heard won The Haddon Training British Grooms Award in 2014.

Photo: Bob Atkins

All taped up

Q I saw a horse being lunged with coloured tape on his hind end. What is this and what does it do?

Angela Brown

A **Harriett Freeman answers:** It sounds like the horse you saw being lunged had been treated with Kinesiology tape, which can be applied to a horse by a qualified therapist. The tape can be used to support your horse's correct musculature function, improve his lymphatic system and help to support his joints.

Kinesiology tape is specially designed to work with your horse's coat – one side is cotton fabric and the other is adhesive acrylic. The tape is applied to areas of his body using different techniques and amounts of tension. The tape as it comes on the roll has 10% tension, which is used for the lymphatic application, but it can be

stretched up to 100% tension for other applications, such as pain relief.

Using a low tension to aid the lymphatic system can help reduce swelling in that area. The tape is attached in a fan shape. This low-level of tension lifts the skin, improves the lymphatic flow, and aids the removal and absorption of waste fluids.

Using a higher tension to aid muscular function, the tape is applied when the muscle is in a stretched position. When the muscle is relaxed, wrinkles form on the tape which helps to lift the skin. This can aid the organisation of the muscle fibres

and improve the capacity under the skin, which will aid faster healing and recovery.

Some horses can react strongly to the sensation of the tape when they move, especially when placed over large muscle groups, so sometimes it's best to let your horse explore these feelings by having a nice stretch on the lunge, which may be what the horse you saw was doing. Once your horse is accustomed to the tape, he can be exercised and ridden normally. Often, using the tape in conjunction with work will help improve the therapeutic benefit of its application.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kinesiology tape can be applied to many different areas of your horse's body, not just his hind end, and it can be applied in many different ways and patterns dependent on the desired outcome.

**TOP TIP**

Use microfibre towels to dry his feather. When they're nearly dry, apply wicking leg wraps.

Wash and blow dry

Q What is the best way to go about washing and drying really muddy feather?

Emma Martin

A **Caroline Heard answers:**

It depends on the reason for washing. If you're doing it purely for cosmetic reasons and to improve how they look on a daily basis, then you are far better to leave the mud to dry and brush it off. This avoids any unnecessary washing, which reduces the feather's natural ability to protect the legs from skin damage and infection.

If you really need to wash them, then use cold water with a mild shampoo. Using cold water reduces the chance of the pores in the skin opening, preventing mud from getting in. If you need to use a whitening shampoo, then apply it once you have removed the majority of the mud. Use your hands or a soft brush to help loosen the mud, being careful not to be abrasive on the skin. Make sure all the shampoo is well rinsed out and no residue is left behind, which could irritate your horse's skin.

Drying your horse's legs thoroughly is important to avoid warm, damp conditions that allow bacteria to flourish. A good but gentle rub with a towel should do this, taking care to get right into the feather. If your horse will allow you to use a hairdryer, then this can be a great way to dry really thick feather.

Gone bananas?

Q One of the girls at my yard feeds her horse bananas, but I've never heard of this before. Is it okay?

Crystal Jenkinson

A **Clare Barfoot answers:**

It may seem odd to see horses eating bananas in the UK, but in countries such as Australia, feeding bananas is as common as feeding apples or carrots to our horses. Bananas contain a rich source of natural sugars and high levels of potassium, which is why you often see athletes eating them. The carbohydrate they contain is very easily digested and ideal for providing energy.

The biggest challenge with feeding them to horses in this country is your horse's initial suspicion as he probably hasn't been offered them before! If you want to feed bananas to your horse, try cutting them up into long slices like you would carrots and place them in his feed before you try feeding them from your hand.

**TOP TIP**

Like any fruit or vegetable you use as a treat, introduce it slowly and feed it in moderation.

Got an excitable horse?

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Q&A

MIND MATTERS

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End of all vices

Q Is it possible for a horse who exhibits stereotypical behaviour to one day no longer exhibit the behaviour, or it is something he will do forever?

Gail Preston

A Natalie Waran answers:

Stereotypic behaviours are repetitive actions and are usually a symptom of a current or previous problem with his ability to cope with his environment. Examples include weaving and cribbing.

The problem with these stereotypic behaviours is that once they have developed, they are difficult to stop, which is why vets will describe them as an unsoundness during a vetting.

Stereotypes develop for different reasons and, in trying to reduce or prevent them, it's important to understand the underlying causal factors. For example, we know that oral stereotypes, such as cribbing, are more likely to develop where a grain-based diet is introduced early in life and the foal experiences early weaning. We also know that cribbing is associated with a low gut pH. This has led researchers to believe that one causal factor might be due to intensively managed horses being fed too much grain and not enough fibre, leading to acidic conditions in the stomach and intestines.

If you want to stand a chance of stopping any stereotypy behaviour it's important to try to resolve the underlying stressor to give you any chance of eliminating the behaviour. For many horses, once the behaviour is established it's hard, but not always impossible, to stop.

DID YOU KNOW?

➤ The best approach to reducing stereotypes is to try to prevent these abnormal behaviours from developing in the first place.

➤ Allowing your horse to do what he has evolved to do – graze for most of the day, eat a forage-based diet, be with others of his own species, and have space to roll and play – will dramatically reduce the likelihood of a stereotypy behaviour developing.

In trying to reduce or prevent stereotypes, it's important to understand the underlying causal factors



Mind over matter

Q When I'm competing, my nerves always get the better of me. What can I do to stop them affecting my performance?

Lizzy Dunning

A Phil Johnson answers: Anxiety related to competition and performance is a common experience in the world of sport, but in equestrian disciplines this doesn't just affect you, but your horse, too. There are two main issues – firstly losing control and secondly losing concentration – as well as a range of other factors that interfere, too.

Nerves represent anxiety that is necessary for the fight or flight response, which is the brain's mechanism for keeping us aware and safe.

However, when you become over-anxious, fearful or worried about the outcome you suffer a loss of attention and focus. This can make you physically tense, and some riders may even reach the point of having a mental blank. Combined with panic and confusion, this leaves you in the state of overload. When your increase in anxiety is beyond the normal range, your brain triggers a rush of hormones and adrenalin. At the same time, emotions such as fear further increase arousal,

your mental processing becomes negative, and you start to think about failure and what could go wrong – for example, not being good enough, fear of falling, or forgetting the test or course.

When you feel like your nerves are getting too much, try nasal breathing – this is breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth in a rhythmic way. Doing this changes the messaging system in your brain and calms down your strong physical response to the arousal.

Then, make sure you understand what you can control and what you cannot, because worrying about things that you have no influence over is of no value to you. It's wasted energy. You can control your breathing and your thoughts, so try changing negatives to positives. Avoid using words such as can't, won't, should, must and never.

Allow your mind to be filled with positive images of you and your horse doing well together in competition and you'll soon start to believe it's possible.

TOP TIP

If you find yourself worrying about a competition a few days or even weeks before the event, you may have a sports trauma issue and it's advisable that you seek psychological support to resolve this.

Full steam ahead

Q My horse always tries to pull me to the front if I go on a hack with my friends. Is there a reason that he doesn't like to be anywhere but at the front?

Sophie Scott-James

A Catherine Bell answers:

Horses are herd animals and within the herd setting each horse will develop a different personality, preference and opinion. These traits will then be influenced by their experiences and the relationships they have with other members of the herd. Some horses will be natural leaders and ultimately lead a herd themselves, whereas others will be happier to be a herd member, without additional responsibilities. The same applies to domestic horses and we could argue that horses going for a hack emulate the movement of a band of horses. Some will like to be exploratory and enjoy investigating their environment as they enlarge their home range. Others will feel less confident to do so, preferring instead to slot in behind and rely on the security of being a normal herd member.

Of course, in a domestic setting we tend to force horses together rather than having them in natural family groups. So horses on a hack might not know each other very well and prefer to keep their distance. Or they may have had a bitter experience of the hind feet of a horse in front, causing them to prefer remaining in front. And different horses have different speeds, so faster-moving horses are more likely to want to be in front of the slower ones.

Take into account the personalities and experiences of your horse and the horses that you're with on your hack. Many riders will try to make their horse do the opposite of what he wants to do, to teach him a lesson. This makes for a stressful hack and the more you can take into account your horse's preferences, the more harmonious and enjoyable your hacks can be.



TOP TIPS

- If your horse wants to be at the front when you're riding in a group, make sure you are able to keep him under control and, because you are likely to be setting the pace, always check behind you that the rest of your group are keeping up.
- Be sure to leave enough space between each horse and don't get too close.

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Q&A

VETERINARY MATTERS

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New friends

Q I only have one horse but I live on a farm, so I am planning to turn my horse out with other animals for company. Is there anything that I need to be aware of when it comes to keeping my horse with other animals?

Clarissa Kershaw

A Laura Jones answers: Horses have evolved as herd animals and aren't really suited to solitary living. If turning your horse out with other horses isn't possible, grazing with another species (cross-grazing) can be a good alternative for companionship, as well as having other benefits.

Horses are selective grazers, which means they will pick and choose which areas and what type of grass to eat, often leaving coarser grass and grass near their

droppings. However, cattle, sheep and goats are non-selective, so will eat the grass, brush and weeds left by horses. This contributes to weed control and prevents the spread of coarse grass patches. Cross-grazing can also help control the amount of grass available to your horse, which can be particularly useful during spring and autumn flushes, so allowing other species to graze long pasture before your horse is turned out can help with weight control.

Cross-grazing can also help to reduce worm burden. Parasites are species-specific, meaning that if a sheep eats a horse worm larvae, the life cycle will be cut short without any adverse effects for the sheep. Of course, each species will still require a suitable worming programme, but cross-grazing may help reduce pasture burdens and reinfection.

DID YOU KNOW?

➤ Post-and-rail fencing won't keep in smaller animals such as sheep and goats, while typical small livestock fencing frequently comprises wire netting and barbed wire, which is unsuitable for horses. Using electric tape fencing in addition to post-and-rail would offer a suitable compromise when keeping horses with small livestock.

➤ It's a common misconception that horses and donkeys can't live together because of the risk of lungworm, but provided a deworming programme as advised by your vet is followed, there shouldn't be a problem.

Collateral damage

Q My nine-year-old gelding damaged his suspensory ligament, and after three months of rest and treatment he is still lame in walk. An X-ray shows that a bone spur has developed on the pastern joint. The ligament injury seems to be healing, but as a result has produced ringbone. What can I do to resolve the new lameness problem?

André Tamba

A Tom Hughes answers:

From the X-ray I can see that your horse has certainly developed osteoarthritis of the pastern joint (ringbone) and the bone spur is part of that disease process.

My first step would be to put some local anaesthetic solution into his pastern joint to check that what we can see on the X-rays is the cause of his current lameness (this procedure is often referred to as a joint block). If this is the case, then I would advise that the joint is injected with a cortisone-type steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. Following the injection, I would give him a short period of rest – in most cases, three to four weeks. The success of the injection is really dependent on how damaged the joint surfaces are and it's difficult to tell because what you can see on the X-ray does not always correlate with the state of the inside of the joint, especially the joint cartilage. What concerns me most is the degree of lameness that he is showing currently. It suggests to me that the injection may not be successful, but would still be worth a try.



DID YOU KNOW?

Ringbone can occur around either the pastern joint (high ring bone) or the coffin joint (low ring bone).

It is more commonly seen in older horses, and usually in the forelimbs, but prognosis is better if it occurs in a hindlimb.

If the cortisone injection is not successful, then the joint could be surgically fused. The pastern joint is responsible for little of the movement in the lower limb, so it wouldn't cause excessive stiffness. Approximately 80% of horses will return to athletic soundness following pastern arthrodesis (fusion), although in my experience I have found a slightly lower success rate in performance horses.



TOP TIP

Check your horse's temperature at the same time every day for a fortnight, so that you get to know what is normal for him.

Full of cold

Q I've had a really bad cold for a few weeks and it made me think my horse doesn't seem to be ill as often as me. I was wondering if horses get colds?

Heather O'Neill

A Adam Rash answers:

Horses do suffer from infections of the upper respiratory tract. The common cold in humans is usually caused by a rhinovirus infection, but may also be due to infection with a coronavirus or adenovirus. Viruses belonging to these families can also affect horses, but they are usually species-specific. It is very rare for a virus to transfer from one species to another and become established in the new host. The equine versions of these viruses have therefore adapted to the horse and will have subtle differences to those that affect humans.

The most common viruses that cause respiratory infections in horses are equine influenza virus (EIV) and equine herpesvirus (EHV). Horses infected with EIV show clinical signs that are very similar to the symptoms that we experience from human influenza infection. These include a fever, a harsh dry cough and nasal discharge. As with influenza in people, it's often the very young or very old that are most at risk of more serious disease, as well as those with underlying health conditions.

There are two strains of EHV – EHV-1 and EHV-4 – that cause respiratory disease. They can also cause abortion in pregnant mares and neurological disease, although this is less commonly caused by EHV-4. The clinical signs of a respiratory infection with EHV-1 and EHV-4 are often similar to those caused by influenza and include fever, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis, depression and loss of appetite.

All of the respiratory infections highlighted here are highly contagious and can spread rapidly from one infected horse to another. Vaccination is often used to limit the severity of disease, while isolation of infected animals can limit the spread to others. If you suspect that your horse has a respiratory infection, consult your veterinary surgeon as soon as possible. You can also check for and report outbreaks of these viruses by visiting equiflunet.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

➤ Respiratory disease can also be caused by bacterial infections – for example, strangles.

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Q&A

HORSEY SHOPPING

OUR EXPERTS



Jon Phillips is Managing Director of The Organisation of Horsebox and Trailer Owners.



Claire Williams is Executive Director of the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA).

Hoof health help

Q I have recently taken on an ex-racehorse and he has quite weak, flaky hooves. My farrier is seeing him regularly, but is there anything else I can do to help improve the quality of his hooves?

Charlie Philpot

A *Horse&Rider* answers:

It is good to hear that your horse is receiving regular visits from the farrier, because the longer the problem of poor hoof quality is left, the harder it is to fix.

First of all, ask your farrier whether your horse's feet are flaky because they are too hard or too soft. Your horse's hooves are just like your nails in that they may be too soft or too brittle and there is more than one cause of each.

There are two things you need to consider when improving your horse's hoof quality. Firstly, the hoof that has already grown and secondly hoof that is yet to grow. To prevent existing hoof from continued deterioration, you can use a range of hoof dressings, hardeners or conditioners, dependent on the cause of the flaking.

Correct nutrition will help to support healthy growth of new, good quality hoof. If you are considering supplements to support your horse's hoof growth, then keep an eye out for those that include a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, particularly biotin, calcium, methionine and zinc. These supplements come in powder, pellet and liquid forms, so it is worth considering which will be best for your horse when you're choosing a product.

If you do choose to feed a supplement, you will need to commit to feeding it for at least a year before you'll see an improvement because of the slow rate of hoof growth. It is also important to follow the manufacturer's recommendations of how much you need to feed and maintain this long-term.

TOP TIP

Regular farriery visits to keep your horse's hooves in good shape can help to reduce chips and splits.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Biotin is also referred to as vitamin H and belongs to the B-complex group of vitamins.
- Your horse can't synthesise biotin himself, so he must receive it through his diet.

- Avoid moving your horse continually between contrasting wet and dry conditions because this causes the hoof to swell and shrink, which can exacerbate problems.

Keeping an eye

Q I want to fit cameras in the horse area of my lorry. How might I go about this and what would I need to consider?

Lizzie Thorne

A **Jon Phillips answers:** Having CCTV cameras in the horse area is a brilliant idea. Being able to quickly and easily check that he is safe means that your journey will be less stressful and enable you to adjust your speed or driving style to suit his needs, ensuring that he arrives in the best possible condition. There are new wireless systems on the market that are perfect for the job, but do some research into what you are getting – the cheapest is unlikely to be the best, but it all depends on what you're expecting from the CCTV system.

You should expect to pay around £200–350 for a good 12- or 24-volt system. You can choose to have up to three cameras all connected via a wireless system to a small 18-centimetre HD screen in the cab. Ensure that any system you buy uses the very latest digital wireless (DW) technology, which will not suffer interference from other wireless devices such as Bluetooth headsets, mobile phones or wireless internet.

TOP TIPS

If you travel after dark, it's advantageous to have a red internal light, because it'll be easier to see the horses.

Cameras should not be used by the driver while moving.



Wiring of these systems is usually quick and easy. Cameras in the horse area are wired directly into the internal lighting system. Check for waterproof connections to the cameras and an infra-red capability for night travelling. The front monitor usually plugs directly into the cigarette lighter, but mounting the monitor requires careful consideration because it's not possible within the law to mount it on the dashboard. If the monitor obscures the driver's view of the road (which is normally accepted as the area swept by the wipers) you will almost certainly fail any MOT test and could well end up with points on your license if you are stopped by the police.



Storage solutions

Q I recently bought a new body protector. When I got it home and read the label I was surprised to see that it should be stored completely flat with all the Velcro undone. It was fitted in the shop, so if I undo the Velcro to store it, how do I get it back to the right fit?

Lacey Adams

A **Claire Williams answers:**

BETA always recommends that body protectors should be placed on a clothes hanger when not in use, with the zip, if it has one, fastened to help the garment to retain its shape. The Velcro straps should be loosened, but kept closed to prevent them becoming clogged with hair and hay.

Velcro straps on a tabard-style body protector will always need to be undone so that the garment can be put on and taken off. When you bought your safety garment, it was presumably fitted by a retailer who was trained to fit safety garments. They will have taken great care to ensure you were provided with the most appropriate style for your shape and requirements, and will have considered the length of the garment and whether it provided adequate coverage of your ribcage, for example.

A body protector should always be fastened tightly, with the coloured markers covered by the Velcro straps. These act as an indicator on all body protectors that meet the BETA 2009 Level 3 standard. If any of the markers remain visible when the straps are fastened, the safety garment does not fit correctly and a larger body protector is needed.

Top tips

- BETA offers a range of free information on safety garments, including the BETA Guide to Body Protectors leaflet. Request one by emailing info@beta-uk.org
- Most body protectors are made from heat-sensitive

PVC nitrile foam, which is why they feel increasingly comfortable as they soften and mould to your body. For this reason, it's good to store your protector at room temperature to ensure it's nice and flexible when you put it on.

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Q&A | IN THE SADDLE

OUR EXPERTS



Lucinda Fredericks has won Burghley, Kentucky and Badminton. She is also coach to the Hong Kong eventing team.



Jessica Grove BSc (Hons) is a personal trainer who specialises in rider fitness and competes in dressage.



Bobby Hayler is a Grand Prix dressage rider and has represented Britain at Pony, Junior and Young Rider level.

Comfy in canter

TOP TIP

When you're practising rising canter, put a neck strap on your horse so that if you lose your balance you have something to grab on to.

Q I have seen some people riding in a rising canter – why do they do this?

Louisa Hughes

A **Lucinda Fredericks answers:** What an interesting question. In a rising canter, the rider stands for one stride and sits for one stride. Rising canter is a bit of a half-measure between cantering in light seat, up off your horse's back and sitting in canter.

You'll see a lot of showjumpers and polo players using rising canter. I'm not entirely sure why, but from personal experience of playing in charity polo matches, the saddles have been dreadfully uncomfortable, so I stood up as much as I could!

Rising canter can help to regulate the canter stride – the motion of rising can be used to pump energy into the canter and sitting can help to balance and steady the stride. Don't be afraid to try rising canter yourself, but remember to land softly on your horse's back on the sit phase.

Rising canter can help to regulate the canter stride



Pay attention!

Q My horse loses focus in the dressage warm-up, looking around and generally ignoring me. What can I do?

Amy Lenton

A Bobby Hayler answers: Firstly, it's easier to retain your horse's attention than to regain it having lost it, so if you can get his attention before he starts looking around, this will give you a good start.

If your horse takes a little while to relax, either when you're competing or riding at home, the best thing to do is focus on keeping him so busy that he can't become distracted. If you keep changing what you're doing, so that he can't predict what you're going to ask for next, he will have to pay attention so that he can respond accordingly.

Rather than riding around in the same pace, build in lots of transitions between walk, trot and canter into your warm-up – for example, ride a downward transition from trot to walk, then

only walk a few steps before you ask for a trot again. You can do the same between trot and canter.

You can also try varying his speed within each pace. Push the trot forward by speeding up your rising, then slow your rising and slow him down again. You can do the same in canter.

When you have a bit more of his attention, you can mix things up further by incorporating some different movements – for example, a serpentine is a good exercise to use because you can increase or decrease the number of loops dependent on the space available. I would suggest riding serpentines with between three and six loops, then add in some upward and downward transitions within the serpentine. This should help you maintain his attention – good luck!

TOP TIP

If your horse likes to look around, allow five minutes at the beginning of your warm-up to walk him around the arena and let him take it all in. Then, when he has relaxed a bit and you decide it's time to start working, make it clear that he must be listening to you.

Posture perfection

Q My riding instructor often tells me I have collapsed my right hip. Is there anything I can do off-horse to improve my posture?

Frankie Birch

A Jessica Grove answers:

If you collapse your hip when you're riding, you're not distributing your weight evenly. The first thing to check is if you do the same off the horse, because it could be that you have asymmetry of the hips. If this is the case, then I would recommend that you see a chiropractor. If your hips are fairly level, then it's about learning to control your body on the horse and strengthening your core stability.

Try this single leg step-up exercise to help with stability, balance and posture control. Use a step that's around 12–18 inches high (you can go lower if you struggle with this height). Place one foot in the middle of the step and push your weight forward and onto your foot. As your body lifts up, stay upright and keep in a dressage position, pulling your belly button in and clenching your bottom. Come into a standing position on top of the step and then lower the same leg again slowly and in control until it reaches the floor. Make sure that you keep yourself in a good, upright position. Do 10 reps on each leg, keeping the same foot on the step throughout the 10 reps and then switch sides.



DID YOU KNOW?

➤ Maintaining correct posture can eliminate or reduce lower back pain.

➤ Avoid crossing your knees when you're sitting or resting one hip while standing, because this will put your spine and pelvis out of alignment. It will also make it harder when you get on your horse to remain in neutral position.

Photo: Bob Atkins

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Q & A | IN BRIEF

OUR EXPERT



Sarah Holmes BHS AI runs her family owned equestrian centre and livery yard, and events at 2* level.



Thinking on his feet

Q My local authority keeps putting stones on the bridlevays so they are suitable for mountain bikes, but my horse isn't shod and it makes him lame. Is there anything I can do, other than have him shod?

Jenny White

A Sarah Holmes answers:

I would suggest that you speak to your farrier about protecting your horse's feet as this is their area of expertise. Potential solutions could include applying a hoof hardener, fitting plastic shoes or

using removable hoof boots when you ride. However, it's likely to be a matter of trial and error to see what solution suits you and your horse best.

If you do have concerns about bridlevays in your area, it's worth contacting your local authority. Other riders may be experiencing the same problem and, if enough people complain, something may be done. You could also raise the issue with your local BHS Bridlevays Officer.



It's a sign

Q Where I ride my horse, bridlevays are marked with sign posts that actually say 'bridleway', but I've just started riding for a friend and the signs on her local common just have discs with different coloured arrows on. What do the different colours mean, as I'm not sure whether I'm riding on the right paths?

Shelley Freeman

A Horse&Rider answers:

Usually, the different-coloured arrows mean the following...

- **Yellow** – footpath
- **Blue** – bridleway
- **Purple** – restricted byway
- **Red** – byway open to all traffic

So you're okay to ride on any path that doesn't have a yellow arrow!



Time for bed

Q I frequently catch my horse's neighbour laying down, but I don't think I've ever seen my own horse curled up in his bed. I'm concerned he's not getting enough rest. How long should he lay down for each day?

N Clarke

A Horse&Rider answers:

Horses mainly sleep standing up, but they do need to have some deep, rapid eye movement sleep each day,

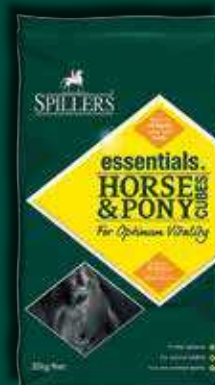
which involves laying down. The amount varies, but on average each horse needs 1-4 hours of deep sleep per day, although this will be divided into several short naps.

It may be that your horse prefers to lie down overnight when the yard is quiet. Check for signs he has laid down, such as bedding on his rug or in his tail, but if you don't think he's laying down at all, it's wise to ask your vet to check him over, as it may be uncomfortable for him to lay down or he may be struggling to get up.



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PROTECTING YOUR DRESSAGE HORSE



Are you a fan of dressage? Some of the work you do with your horse could be putting areas of his body at risk of injury. Vet Rachel Murray from the Animal Health Trust looks at why, and shares ways to keep him fit and healthy

Our expert



Rachel Murray MA VetMB MS PhD MRCVS Dip ACVS Dip ECVS is an American Specialist in Equine Surgery and Associate of the European College of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging. She is Senior Orthopaedic Advisor at the Animal Health Trust, specialising in research into lameness and sport horse performance problems.

Dressage requires grace, harmony, skill and power. Horses are trained to perform movements of gradually increasing difficulty as they progress up the levels, which are achieved by increasing their strength, flexibility, fitness and co-ordination – and, of course, their skills and understanding. Some movements can be quite demanding and one of the major reasons that dressage horses don't make it to elite level is because they are injured.

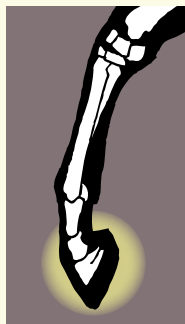
In a study run by the Animal Health Trust (AHT) with British Dressage, 24% of dressage horses had been lame in the previous two years and these horses had been unable to compete for an average of five months, which is a significant amount of time in a two-year period. The study also revealed information about what injuries dressage horses are at risk of.

Using this information, we can take a closer look at the key problems affecting dressage horses and take steps towards reducing their occurrence. ➤



Common sites of injury

So we know that dressage horses can be prone to injury, but what are the most common problems?



Foot pain

Forces are greatest at the ends of your horse's limbs, so for an extravagant-moving dressage horse with long legs, the forces experienced by his feet are pretty high even if he's mainly working on an even surface.

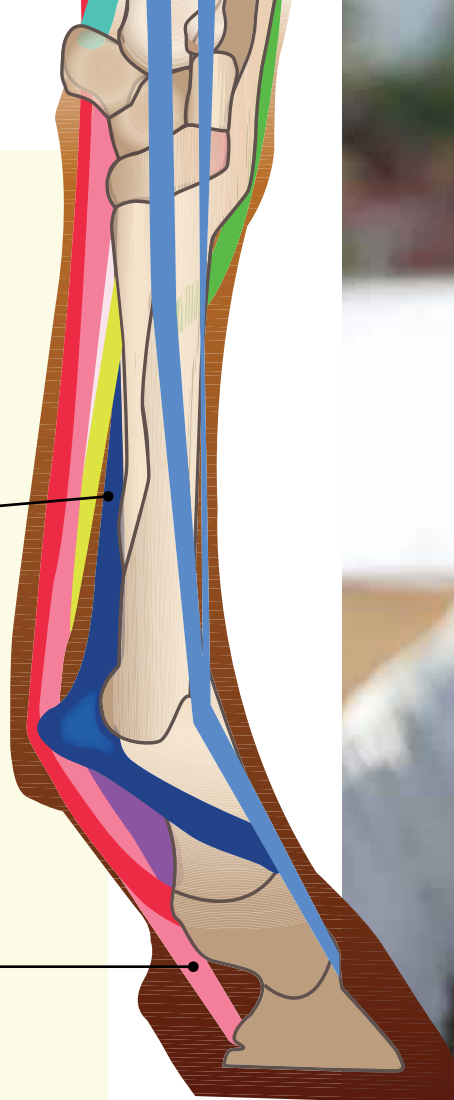
Foot pain could be caused by a foot abscess or bruise on the sole, or a more serious problem such as damage to the deep digital flexor

tendon, navicular bone or collateral ligament. Horses working at lower levels tend to carry more weight on their forehand, which puts more weight on their front feet and increases the risk of pain compared to horses at higher levels, who carry relatively more weight on their hindlimbs.

Correct shoeing and trimming is critical for foot balance and to support your horse's feet when he is doing difficult movements. A small change in the foot can affect the way your horse moves, so working closely with a good farrier is a very important part of managing your dressage horse to prevent injury.

Suspensory ligament

Deep digital flexor tendon



Why do dressage horses get injured?

Doing dressage does not involve galloping across uneven ground, sudden twisting and stopping while chasing a ball, sliding down hills or jumping over obstacles, so why are dressage horses so prone to injury? Let's take a look at the possible reasons...

● **Horses are flight animals**, designed to be wandering gently over varied terrain for long distances, then suddenly taking flight away from predators. Dressage horses, on the other hand, are often worked in an arena, doing many small turns and movements that are repeated over and over again, so particular joints, tendons, ligaments and muscles within their body are repeatedly loaded in the same way.

If this is done too many times, your horse could suffer from repetitive overload injury. This is more likely to happen if he is not strong enough or fit enough to do the movements. The more tired he becomes, the less co-ordinated he'll be and the more wobbly he'll become

– just like the jelly legs you would experience after running a long race.

Horses only doing dressage training are more likely to be at risk of injury than horses doing cross-training, which includes hacking, jumping, lungeing and being turned out. Cross-training protects against lameness by developing fitness and strength without repeating the same few movements over and over again.

● **Respiratory problems** may exacerbate tiredness, meaning that your horse will not get enough oxygen to his muscles to keep performing. In fact, in the AHT study, horses with a respiratory problem had more than four times the risk of developing lameness than a horse without. So taking care of the respiratory health of your dressage horse might be important for preventing lameness as well as maintaining his wellbeing.

● **A saddle that does not fit or a rider who is out of balance** will make it more difficult for your horse to avoid injury. Not only do we need to improve our core strength as riders, but we need to do the same for our horses, too.

It is critical that dressage horses have really well-developed core muscle strength, as it is these muscles that support the weight of the rider, connect the front and hindlimbs, and allow small movements through the back in order to successfully perform movements and maintain posture. If your horse doesn't have good core strength, he'll use the wrong muscles and eventually become very sore through his back, potentially overloading his limbs and risking damage to tendons and ligaments.

Hacking is hugely beneficial for dressage horses





Suspensory ligament injuries

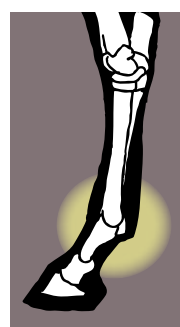
One of the most common reasons for lameness in dressage horses is damage to the suspensory ligament. They are at higher risk of suspensory ligament injury than horses doing any other sport, which suggests that there may be something about dressage that causes this problem.

The suspensory ligament runs from just below the hock or knee to the fetlock and extends past the fetlock as the distal sesamoid ligaments. It functions to stop the fetlock overextending and dropping too far. Damage to the top of the hindlimb suspensory ligament is the most common and can start gradually or is sometimes sudden in onset.



Hock damage

Hock pain is common in dressage horses, no matter the level of training. A horse working at the lower levels who is less strong and stable might damage his hock by twisting it as he loses balance. Meanwhile a horse working at a higher level may be more stable, but he can potentially overload his hock as more weight is carried on his hindlimbs and the amount of hock flexion is increased.



Fetlock injuries

The fetlock region is another common site of problems, both in the hindlimbs and forelimbs. As your horse pushes off more from the floor and takes bigger strides, his fetlock will drop and potentially overextend, putting strain on the joint and its supporting tendons and ligaments.

● **Uneven and poorly maintained arenas** increase the risk of lameness, as do surfaces that become deep or boggy in the wet or do not stay uniform in the dry. Horses are more likely to trip, slip and lose balance if the surface is poorly maintained, whatever type of surface it is, so arena construction and maintenance are important for preventing injury.

The most important protective factor for most dressage horses is to work on multiple surfaces and not only on a single arena. This improves co-ordination and proprioception, and will make your horse more able to deal with meeting different surfaces at a competition or clinic, or when there is a change in weather conditions.



Prepare him for different ground conditions

● Diagonal advanced placement

– where, in trot, horses land with the hindlimb of the diagonal pair before the forelimb, rather than moving them together as usual – gives an appearance of the horse being uphill, so he's likely to be given higher marks. Therefore, horses who have this pattern of movement are often selected for dressage.

Moving in this way potentially puts more

strain on the hindlimbs, particularly the hindlimb suspensory ligament. By selecting for and breeding horses with diagonal advanced placement, there are increasing numbers

of horses capable of gaining higher marks, but these horses might need to be protected more during training to prevent injury.



Diagonal advanced placement

● Certain dressage movements

can increase the risk of suspensory ligament injury. It was believed that collection was the main risk factor, but it has been found that extended trot puts more strain on this ligament than collected trot. This is a particular concern in young horses or horses without enough muscle development to stabilise their body and limbs, so it is important that young horses are trained carefully to develop stability before they are asked to perform extended or difficult movements.

Sometimes at auctions and in young horse classes, showing an extravagant trot is desirable, but this may not be ideal for preventing injury. ➤

Safeguard his future

While there are elements of dressage that clearly put your horse's body under strain, there is much you can do to help minimise the risk of injury...

- **Use cross-training** as part of your horse's weekly training plan. Include hacking, jumping, lungeing and turnout to protect against repetitive overloading injuries
- **Ride on lots of difference surfaces** to improve your horse's co-ordination
- **Make sure his saddle is checked** and refitted on a frequent basis to reduce the risk of back pain and injury
- **Work closely with a good farrier** to optimise your horse's foot balance. This will help him to perform well and protect him from injury
- **Develop his core muscle strength** and stability. Consult an ACPAT registered physiotherapist who will be able to advise you on the best programme for your horse
- **Be patient.** Most Grand Prix horses are over 12 years old because their trainers have invested 10 years in their development, gradually increasing the difficulty and, therefore, the physical pressures on the horse

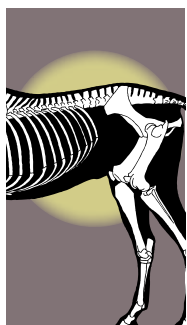


Next issue:

How to protect against showjumping injuries.

Could there be a problem?

Differentiating between a training problem and an injury can be a challenge. Many people forget that pain may be the reason why a horse is starting to become resistant, is bucking or doesn't like going forward on one rein compared with the other. These issues are often attributed to training problems, but may be because the horse is not strong enough, fit enough or flexible enough, or because it hurts.



Back pain

Back pain is often seen in dressage horses, with 25% of horses in the AHT study being reported to have suffered from back pain. The most common location is the thoracolumbar region, particularly the area under and just behind the saddle. This may be a direct reflection of lameness, where your horse has developed

a movement pattern to compensate for the lameness. Although horses can have injuries to the ligaments or bones of the back, many horses have back muscle pain related to poor core muscle development, poor saddle fit or rider issues.

Sacroiliac region pain is more likely to be detected in dressage horses and showjumpers than horses doing other sports. This can make your horse very uncomfortable and resistant to working, but can be quite hard to identify initially as he'll tend to resent working rather than showing obvious lameness.

Horses with hindlimb lameness often develop secondary sacroiliac joint pain because of the strains on the pelvic region. It is quite common to see horses with hindlimb suspensory ligament injury and sacroiliac pain together.

The sooner an injury is picked up, the better the chance of fixing it without irreversible damage. So if you're experiencing problems while riding your dressage horse, it is important to realise that it could be caused by pain and that a visit from your vet might be necessary.

A variety of diagnostic techniques can be used to identify the source of pain, and develop an appropriate treatment and recovery plan...

- Nerve blocks are used to locate the areas of pain
- Muscle patterns are assessed in relation to the horse's gait
- Diagnostic imaging, including X-ray

and ultrasound, is used to assess bones, tendons and ligaments

- MRI can provide more detailed information on all the structures of a specific area and their interrelationships
- Scintigraphy, also known as a bone scan, can be helpful to look at rates of bone turnover as a marker of injury

Because many horses have multiple problems, it is important to work out which are primary (the main cause) and which are secondary (resulting from the main cause), so that all the problems can be managed in the most effective way.

In recovery

Rehabilitation and physiotherapy are very important for the recovery of any injury, because your horse will need to relearn how to move correctly in the right posture to avoid damage to other parts of his body and prevent reinjury. Putting a programme of physiotherapy, and strength and stability training in place will enable your horse to develop even muscle strength, ensuring his joints are supported and that movements can be performed without jeopardising bone and soft tissue structures. ■


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Secret killer

Horses are strong, powerful animals, but a colony of botulism bacteria the size of a pinhead can literally bring them to their knees. Vet Tom Righton from Hook Norton Vets explains more about this little-known disease

Rare but usually lethal, botulism is a neurological disease that causes extreme weakness and paralysis throughout the horse's body. You may have heard of the condition affecting humans, causing gastrointestinal upset and neurological problems, but few people are aware that botulism can affect horses, too.

It is caused by a toxin that is produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*, which is from the same family as

Clostridium tetani – the bacteria that causes tetanus. The spores of *C. botulinum* are found in soil and organic material, and when these spores germinate they produce the toxins that cause disease.

While botulism isn't contagious and can't be spread between horses, outbreaks on yards affecting multiple horses can occur if they've all had access to a source of the toxin, such as a batch of contaminated feed. *C. botulinum* is not selective – it can affect any breed, age or sex of horse that has been exposed to the toxins. ➤

Our expert



Tom Righton BVSc MRCVS qualified from Liverpool University in 2011 and joined the team at Hook Norton Veterinary Group, a member of XLEquine, in 2014. He has a special interest in orthopaedic work, as well as lameness work-ups and wound management.

How do horses get botulism?

Horses can contract botulism via three main routes...



Ingestion of preformed botulinum toxins within feed,

sometimes known as forage poisoning. This can occur when poor-quality forage or spoiled hard feed has been fed, particularly if it has been contaminated with soil or faeces, or when a dead animal carcass is accidentally baled with forage. The decomposition of this organic material in an anaerobic environment with high moisture content and alkaline pH, such as silage or haylage, provides the ideal conditions for the bacteria to produce toxins.

Via contaminated wounds.

This occurs when *C. botulinum* bacteria contaminate a wound and multiply. For this to happen, there needs to be anaerobic conditions, such as in deep puncture wounds or injection sites, and in abscesses.



Ingestion of *C. botulinum* bacteria,

which is seen most commonly in foals (shaker foal syndrome). However, there have not been any reported cases of botulism in foals in the UK, it is more of a problem in other countries. It occurs when foals start grazing, usually from about two weeks of age. The foal ingests *C. botulinum* spores from the soil, then the bacteria develops and multiplies within the gut, and begins producing toxins that are absorbed by the foal. This was previously thought not to occur in adult horses because the normal gut bacteria inhibit the botulinum spores from germinating. However, recent research into the underlying cause of grass sickness has brought this into question.

How the toxin works

The botulinum toxin is a neurotoxin. It binds to nerve endings where they join the muscle and blocks the release of neurotransmitter chemicals that would normally pass on impulses to the muscle. This prevents nerve impulses reaching the muscles, causing flaccid paralysis of muscles throughout the body.

Signs of sickness

Symptoms can occur a few hours after acquiring the toxin, but may take up to a week depending on the amount of toxin present.

- **In the early stages**, a horse with botulism will have...
 - generalised muscle weakness
 - a dull demeanour
 - difficulty eating feed and swallowing caused by reduced tongue muscle tone
 - dilated pupils
 - muscle trembling

- **Botulism in foals** most typically presents with...
 - muscle tremors
 - weakness
 - drooling of milk or milk running from the nose due to dysphagia (inability to swallow correctly)

In both foals and adults, the symptoms will progress to include an elevated heart and respiratory rate, difficulty standing

and difficulty urinating. They may become so weak that they are unable to stand and lie on their side. Death occurs due to respiratory failure caused by paralysis of the diaphragm muscle, which leads to suffocation, or cardiac paralysis, which results in cardiac arrest. The speed of progression of the disease is dependant upon the amount of toxin present, but can be very rapid.

It is important to remember that botulism is uncommon and that there are other more common causes of some of the symptoms displayed, so if your horse is showing some of the symptoms, don't panic. For example...

- **dullness** is a very general symptom seen with a wide variety of conditions
- **difficulty in eating and swallowing** is commonly seen with dental problems and choke (an obstruction within the oesophagus)

General weakness is a key sign of botulism



Botulism is uncommon and there are other more common causes of some of the symptoms

- **weakness and recumbency** are more commonly seen in horses following trauma, colic and myopathies (muscle disorders)
- **regurgitation and nasal flow of milk** in foals can be caused by a cleft palate

When to call your vet

Same day appointment

- Dull demeanour
- Difficulty eating or swallowing
- Muscle trembling

Emergency appointment

- Difficulty passing urine
- Weakness and struggling to stand
- Recumbent (unable to stand)

Reaching a diagnosis

Your vet is likely to make a presumptive clinical diagnosis based upon a detailed history, and symptoms of difficulty eating and reduced tongue tone that progresses to muscle weakness and finally recumbency. A variety of diagnostic tests are likely to be performed to rule out other possible diagnoses.

Definitive diagnosis using laboratory testing is difficult because there are limited laboratory tests available. Feed can be tested for *C. botulinum* spores or toxin and if they are found in the feed of a patient with symptoms of botulism, it can help confirm a diagnosis. Unfortunately, only a tiny amount of contaminated feed is required to produce the disease and the rest of the feed may be completely normal, making it very difficult to find the spores or toxin.

Faecal culture of the *C. botulinum* bacteria is most useful in foals, detecting 80% of cases. However, in adult horses only 20% of cases can be diagnosed this way and *C. botulinum* can be found in up to 3% of normal, healthy horses' faeces.

Supportive therapy

Unfortunately, treatment for botulism is time-consuming and expensive, as affected horses are likely to require a lengthy period of hospitalisation with intensive nursing to stand a chance of survival. In severe, rapidly progressing cases where the horse has been recumbent for more than 24 hours, the prognosis for survival is extremely poor. For horses still standing with more slowly progressing clinical signs, the prognosis is slightly better, but still potentially fatal.

Within the UK, there is no available antitoxin, but antitoxin can be imported from the United States under a special license. Unfortunately, this takes too long to be helpful in most cases because it needs to be administered as early as possible. The antitoxin does not reverse the clinical signs. Instead, it binds any toxin that has not yet blocked a nerve ending. Once the toxin has blocked a nerve ending receptor, that receptor is irreversibly blocked.

The horse recovers by regenerating new receptors at its nerve endings to allow the passage of nerve impulses from the nerve to the muscle again. This takes 4–10 days, during which time the horse may get worse before improvement is seen.

Recovery can take months and requires a diligent and dedicated owner. Despite the high mortality rate, some horses do make a full recovery. During the recovery period, he will require intensive supportive therapy, including...

- **a deep bed and turning the horse regularly** to prevent sores. Slings can be used if the horse requires assistance standing.
- **nutritional and fluid support** given via a nasogastric tube to help keep his strength up while he cannot eat or drink for himself.
- **laxatives and manual evacuation of faeces** from the rectum and **catheterisation of the bladder** is required if the horse is not able to urinate and defecate by himself.
- **antibiotics** in cases with secondary pneumonia. This can occur if food is inhaled while trying to eat and in cases of wound botulism.





Don't allow your horse to eat spoiled forage

Reducing the risk

Fortunately, botulism is uncommon in the UK, but cases do occur sporadically in certain areas where the bacterium is present in the environment. Several simple management strategies can help to reduce the risk, most of which will already be in place on well-run yards...

- **Feed only good-quality roughage.** If any hay or haylage has spoiled, or is grossly contaminated with soil or a carcass, then that section should be disposed of
- **Mouldy or spoiled hard feeds** should always be disposed of
- **Feeding big bale silage should be avoided** because it poses a higher risk of carrying *C. botulinum* spores. If large bales are used, then they should be spread out before being fed – the toxins break down within a couple of hours of being exposed to UV light
- **Deep, contaminated wounds** should be swiftly referred to a vet for appropriate treatment to reduce the chance of wound infection

A vaccine is licensed for prevention of the *C. botulinum* type B strain in the USA and it is used primarily in areas where high rates of shaker foal syndrome are diagnosed. Pregnant mares are given monthly vaccinations during the last three months of gestation to ensure high levels of antibodies against *C. botulinum* are passed to their foals via the mares' colostrum. Horses in the UK are not vaccinated, however they may be vaccinated prior to being exported to areas of the USA where high levels of botulism occur.

Several simple management strategies can help reduce the risk

A link with equine grass sickness

Grass sickness is a disease in which damage to the nerves supplying the gastrointestinal system occurs, leading to paralysis of the gut. High incidences of grass sickness have been seen in specific geographical areas and in the UK it is seen most in the east of the country, although cases have been reported throughout the UK.

The cause of grass sickness has not been determined, but one area currently under investigation is the link between *C. botulinum* type C and grass sickness. In 1918, a team in Aberdeen who were researching high rates of grass sickness in eastern Scotland noted that there were similarities between botulism and grass sickness, even going as far as a vaccine trial. Unfortunately, this area of research lost traction after the research proved inconclusive.

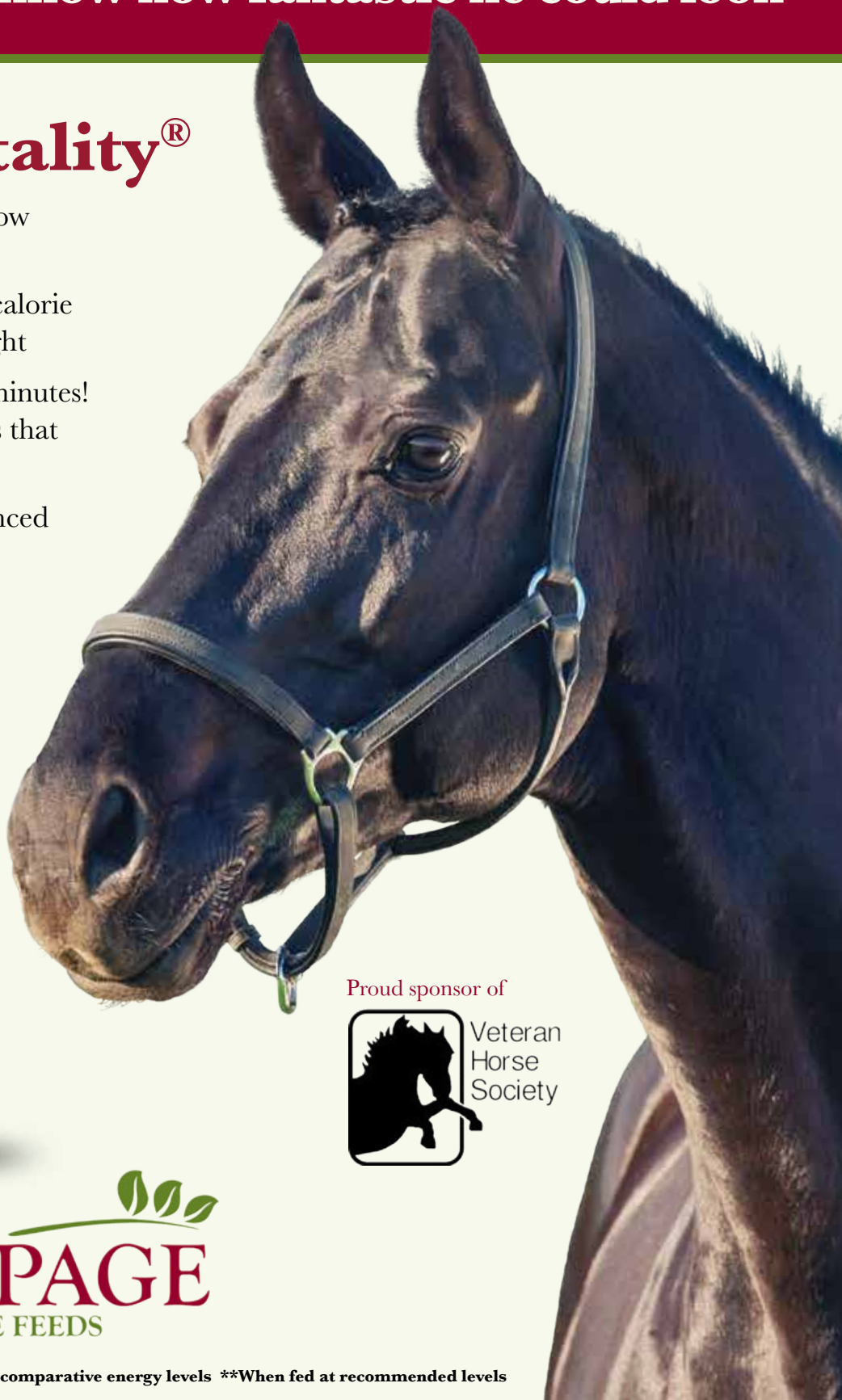
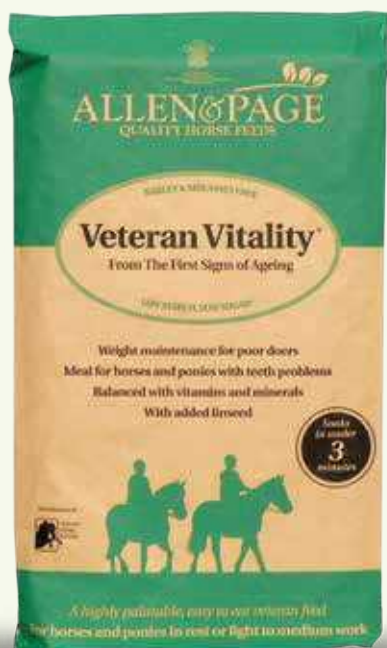
Recent research has been once more directed towards the role of *C. botulinum*. The theory is that some normal, healthy horses carry the bacterium, which is kept in check by the rest of the gut bacteria and immune system. Grass sickness is thought to be triggered when there is a recent change in diet, causing a disruption to the balance of gut bacteria and a massive proliferation of *C. botulinum*, which then produces toxin that causes the paralysis of the gastrointestinal system.

Research has shown high levels of the bacterium in grass sickness cases compared to a normal population of horses. A vaccination trial is now in place to try to establish whether vaccination causes a reduction of grass sickness in high risk areas, but it will be some time before we know the results of this trial. ■

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Equine

SIGHT

senses

For your horse, sight is the most important sense of all, allowing him to detect predators from a long way away so that he can keep himself safe. Vet Kelly Harty from Fellowes Farm Equine Clinic explains

Our expert



**Kelly Harty MVB
CertAVP(EP) MRCVS**
joined Fellowes Farm Equine Clinic, a member of XLEquine, in 2015. She has a particular interest in equine lameness and poor performance.

When you're hacking out, it becomes clear that your horse's sight is very different to your own. You might be riding past what is obviously a fallen tree, but while you're both seeing the same thing, to him it may appear different and cause him to behave in a way you wouldn't expect. For example, a small beam of sunlight might be lighting up part of the tree, making it look unusual, or a squirrel scrabbling out of sight might catch his eye.

If he lived in the wild, your horse's sight would be essential for his survival – his vision is highly sensitive to movement so that he can easily detect the presence of predators in any light. The importance of sight to your horse is reflected in the size of his eye, which is the largest of any land mammal – he produces retinal images that are 50% larger than your own. To add to this, the visual cortex of his brain handles one-third of all sensory input.

DID YOU KNOW?

When your horse has his head down grazing, his binocular vision allows him to see the ground while at the same time his monocular vision allows him to keep an eye out for predators approaching on the horizon.

The equine eye

The **cornea** is the clear dome on the front surface of the eye that allows light in. It protects the front of the eye and helps to focus light on the retina.

The **pupil** is the black area in the middle of the eye. It is controlled by sphincter muscles. In a dark environment, it enlarges to allow light in and if the environment is bright, the pupil becomes smaller.

The **lens** is soft, transparent tissue that sits behind the iris. It focuses light onto the retina and changes shape to enable this.

The **iris** is the circular, coloured area of the eye. It controls the amount of light entering the eye by making the pupil larger or smaller.

The **retina** is the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye. It contains photosensitive rod and cone cells that convert light into electrical impulses that travel along the optic nerve to the brain. The most sensitive area of the retina is the visual streak, which contains thousands of tightly-packed photoreceptors that make images sharp. If your horse wants to take a better look at something, he will adjust the position of his head so that the object falls within this area.

The **eyelids** are thin folds of skin that cover the eye and blink to protect it. Blinking also helps spread tears over the surface of the eye, keeping it moist and clearing away small particles.

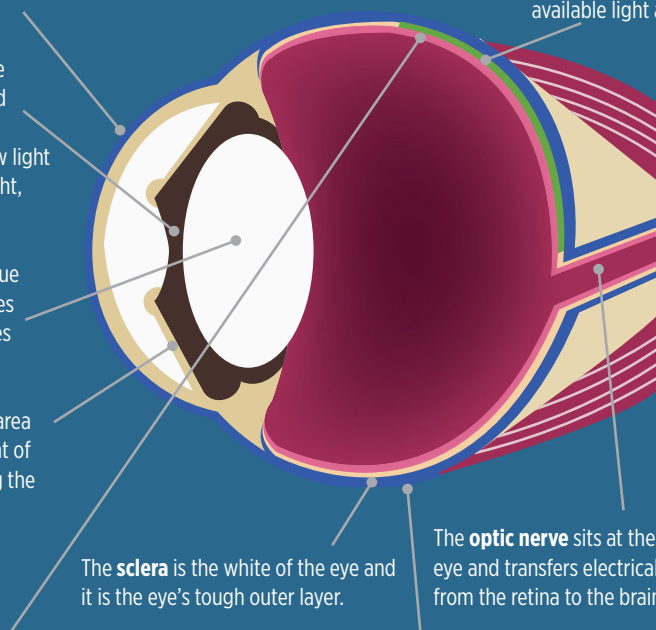
The **orbit** is a bony socket in the skull that protects your horse's eye.

The **tapetum** is a reflective area that helps to gather available light at night.

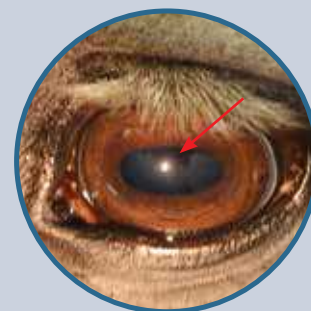
The **sclera** is the white of the eye and it is the eye's tough outer layer.

The **optic nerve** sits at the back of the eye and transfers electrical impulses from the retina to the brain.

The **conjunctiva** is the thin membrane that covers the sclera and lines the inside of the eyelids.



The **corpora nigra** is a dark, irregular structure that sits at the top of the pupil. It's believed to shade the pupil from glare.



The **third eyelid** is a whitish-pink colour and is found under the other eyelids in the inside corner of the eye, nearest the nose. It provides additional protection for the eye and extends up when needed, wiping the eye clean. It also provides extra lubrication.



Your horse's vision is highly sensitive to movement so that he can easily detect the presence of predators in any light

DID YOU KNOW?

If your horse sees something he's not sure of with monocular vision, he'll alter his position so he can get a better look at it in binocular vision.

One eye or two?

Your horse sees in both monocular vision (with each eye viewing different things) and binocular vision (where both eyes are focused on the same object). However, most of his sight is monocular and there is only an arc of around 55–65° in front of him where he is able to see with binocular vision.

Both eyes can be used to look at a distant object until it comes within approximately one metre, when your horse will be forced to turn his head and look with only one eye. You will know when your horse is using binocular vision because he will usually stand alert, with both of his ears focused on an object in front of him.

Because he relies mostly on monocular vision, he has poor depth perception – he can misjudge the depth of a small puddle or the distance to a fence. Horses compensate for this by comparing the size of an object to a memory of something they've seen in the past – for example, if a fence appears smaller, then it must be further away.





DID YOU KNOW?

Horses can see distinct images better than dogs can, but not as well as humans can.

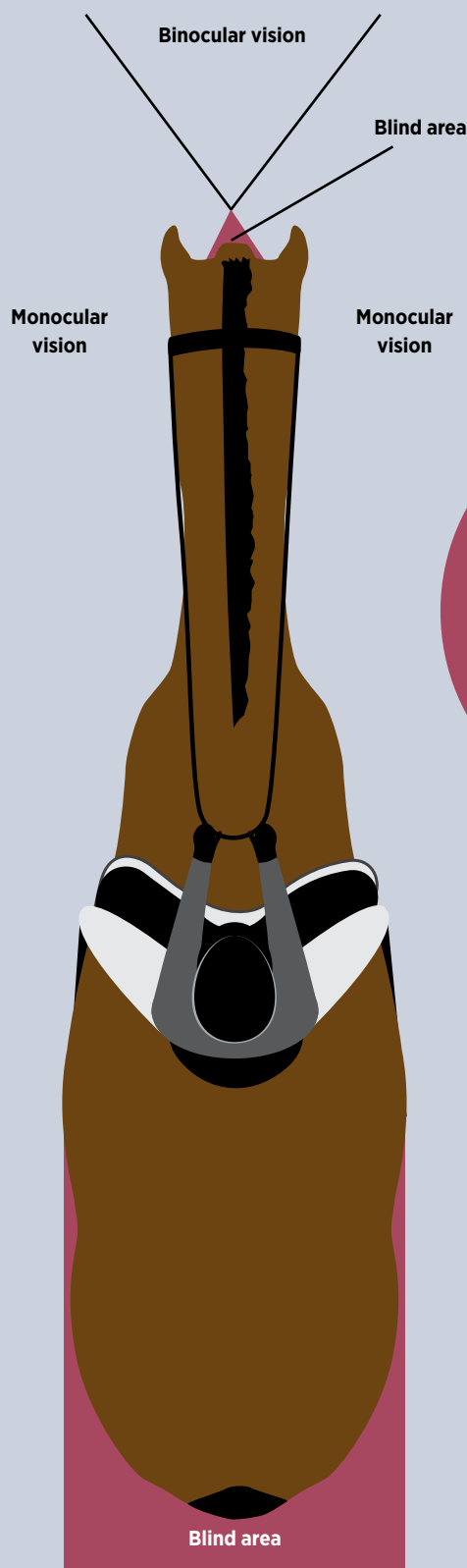
In focus

Your horse is unable to focus his eyes in the way you and most other animals can, and his vision is not as sharp as yours. Have you ever noticed your horse raising and lowering his head to look at an object? He does this to adjust the focal length, moving until the object comes into focus on his retina. He will usually need to lower his head to judge closer distances and raise it to judge objects further away.

“Your horse will raise and lower his head to look at objects, until they come into focus on his retina”

Field of vision

Your horse's eyes are set on the side of his head, rather than the front like your own, and this gives him extraordinary peripheral vision, which is useful for animals who must constantly watch out for predators. The placement of his eye and its horizontal, ovoid pupil allow him a total visual field of approximately 350° without moving his head. Narrow blind spots exist immediately in front of his nose and directly behind his hindquarters.



The long and short of it

Because horses are prey animals, they have evolved to be long sighted so they can detect any potential predators from a long distance. Interestingly, around one third of domestic horses are short sighted, possibly due to the fact that being long sighted is of no advantage in a domestic situation.

DID YOU KNOW?

When your horse is working on the bit, he is unable to see what's ahead of him.

Night and day

There are two types of photoreceptor cell in the retina in your horse's eye, called rods and cones. Cone cells allow him to see colour and rod cells, which are very sensitive to light, enable him to see at night.

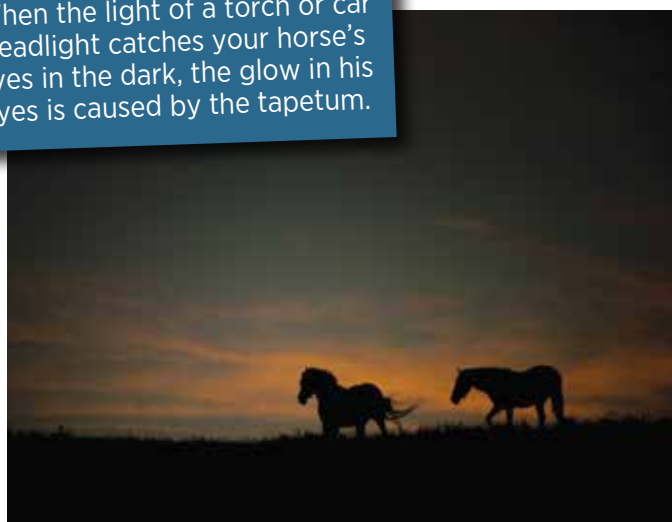
Your horse's vision is dichromatic (two-colour), so he has two different types of cone cell, whereas your vision is trichromatic (three-colour) and you have three types of cone cell. This means that your horse is able to see in colour, but not as well as you can. It is difficult to know for sure what colours horses see, but it is thought to be similar to the vision of a colourblind person, where they see in blue and yellow hues, but are unable to distinguish between red and green.

Your horse has a large number of rods, which makes his night vision very effective, and to enhance this further, he has a tapetum, which is a reflective area on the retina that helps to gather all the available light at night. These specialised features enable your horse to see considerably better in the dark than you can.

However, it takes your horse's eyes much longer to adjust between light and dark than it does your own, and it can take up to 20 minutes for them to adjust fully. It's important to remember this when asking your horse to jump from light into dark on a bright day, or to walk into a trailer or lorry – you might be able to see what's coming, but to your horse it's like going into a black hole. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

When the light of a torch or car headlight catches your horse's eyes in the dark, the glow in his eyes is caused by the tapetum.



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Considerate bitting

Understanding the anatomy of your horse's mouth is essential if you're to choose a bit that suits him. Tricia Nassau-Williams unravels the mystery of mouth conformation

For most of us, the bit is an integral part of the way we communicate with our horses when we're in the saddle. And while we spend plenty of energy, time and money selecting the perfect saddle and having it fitted, how many of us give equal consideration to the piece of metal we put inside our horse's sensitive mouth?

All horses are unique and, much like people, come in all shapes and sizes. Even if you're the same clothing size as your best friend, the chances are that your clothes won't fit them in the same way they fit you – subtle differences in height, shape and body type all play a part. It should come as no surprise, then, that selecting the correct bit for your horse means considering more than just how strong or resistant he is.

Get into good habits

It's important to establish good practices to care for your horse's mouth as part of your stable management routine. If you don't already, arrange for regular (at least annual) dental check-ups with either your vet or a qualified Equine Dental Technician. Take advantage of having such an expert to hand and ask them to show you how to part your horse's lips and look at his mouth, palate, lips and bars.

Once you know how, it's a good idea to do this on a regular basis after your horse



has been ridden to look for any biting issues before they become a problem. At the same time, feel around and over his poll, bridle path, face and jaw for any areas of oversensitivity. Watch his eyes, ears and chin for signs of negative body language as this will highlight possible problem areas.

It's important to monitor the condition of your bit as well as your horse's mouth. Always wash the bit after every use by rinsing it in clean water, then checking its condition and drying it with a clean towel. This is not only important for hygiene, but also helps you spot any wear or damage before they affect your horse.

Our expert



Tricia Nassau-Williams is Lorinery Lecturer and Projects Manager at The Worshipful Company of Loriners.

The families of biting

There are an overwhelming number of designs of bit, but they can almost all be placed into one of six families of biting. Each is defined by how the mechanics (action) of the bit works, the pressure points that it uses and consequently the probable reaction to this by the horse. In this way a logical process can be followed when selecting a bit for your horse. The families of biting are snaffles, curbs (double bridles), pelhams, running gags, lever bits and bitless bridles.



The bit in your hands

It's very easy to focus on your horse, his conformation and bit designs when selecting the best bit to use, but if this is all you take into account then you're missing a vital consideration – you! Are you balanced, with an independent seat? Do you ride from the leg to the hand when schooling? Do you reward your horse with still, quiet hands when he responds to your aids? Be honest about your weaknesses as well as your strengths, because they will affect which bit is best for you and your horse as a partnership.

Remember, the bit is only a communication tool and any form of good communication relies on listening as much as asking. ➤



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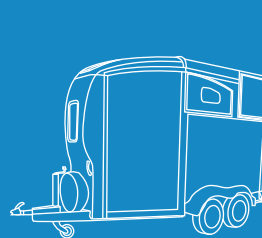
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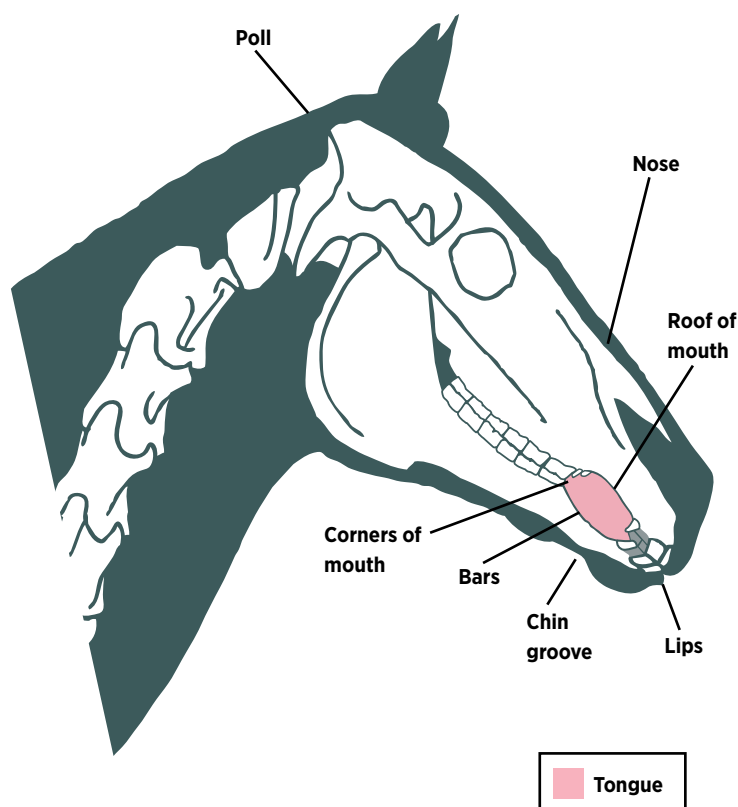
Arabs' dished faces mean they have lower palates

Inside his mouth

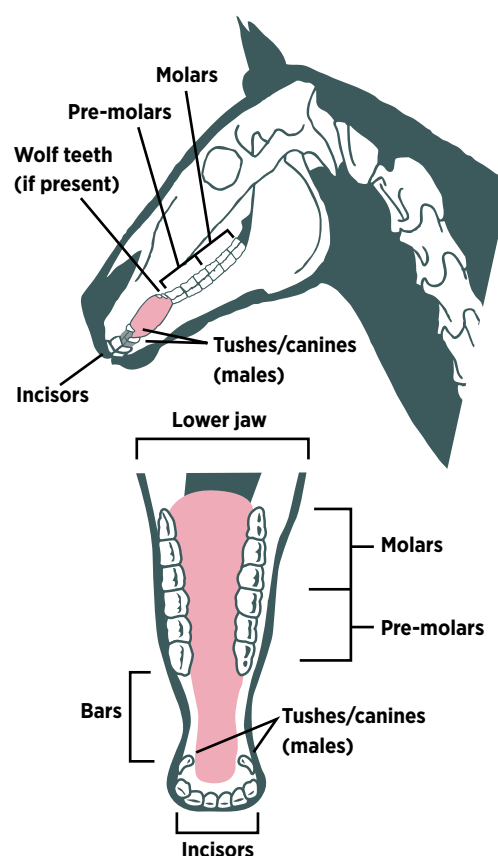
It is often not until you see a horse's skull that you realise just how long his mouth really is, how much his top row of back teeth protrude outwards at the sides over the bottom ones, or how vulnerable his bars are. The size and shape of his mouth can vary significantly between different breeds. This will include how fine and narrow or broad his bars are, and also how long or short his mouth can be. In addition, horses with dished faces, such as Arabs and Connemaras, may have lower palates with less room between their tongue and the roof of their mouth.



Biting pressure points



Inside the horse's mouth



Biting control pressure points

There are seven pressure points that bits and bridles can act upon. Four are inside your horse's mouth, with direct pressure from the bit applied to his lips, tongue, bars and the roof of his mouth (the latter is not recommended). Three are indirect pressure points created by the action of the bit in conjunction with the bridle or curb chain. These include the nose, chin groove and poll. Bitless bridles generally act upon the poll, nose and jaw. Regardless of which family the bit is in (excluding, of course, bitless bridles), the bit fits over the tongue above the toothless area known as the bars, which are situated between

the front corner teeth and first back teeth. The area that accommodates the bit is from the corners of the lips to behind the front teeth. This includes the lips, the lifting end section of the tongue, the bars and the tongue groove. In addition to these areas, different bits act on different parts of the horse's head...

- Bits with a shank and rein attachment below the mouthpiece also place pressure downwards through the bridle onto the poll.
- Curb chains apply pressure to the chin groove, encouraging the head and neck to flex.

- Nosebands and some bridles place pressure on the nose and around the face and jaw.

Mouthpiece design varies within and between bit families. Their shape, angle and thickness affect how they apply pressure to the different sections of the mouth. (For more on this, see part 2, *Horse&Rider* Spring issue, on sale 11 February)

Not all of the seven biting pressure points will be applied by all bits or bridles, and it is the mechanics of the bit's design and how the bit works that will influence this and the resulting action upon the horse.

Conformation concerns

There are many different types of mouth conformation considerations to be accommodated when successfully biting your horse. Here are a few...

- **Spacious long mouths with slim tongues** – often found in Thoroughbreds, this mouth type will have plenty of room for biting and can be happily fitted with a thicker mouthpiece.
- **Long mouth length** – can require extra care when fitting a bit with a curb chain to ensure that, when the bit is at the correct height for the mouth, the curb chain is still sitting correctly in the chin groove and not lifting upwards behind it.
- **Short mouths (including short lip length)** – here there will be limited space to accommodate the bit if it is bulky, or if a double bridle is used. This can be addressed by using finer mouthpieces that are sympathetically shaped. An example of this is often seen with show cobs who wear a Pelham instead of a double bridle.



Long mouth



Short mouth

- **Crowded, full mouths with large tongues** – use mouthpieces that are finer and with design contours that allow for the shape of the tongue.
- **Deep or shallow tongue grooves** – the size of the tongue groove (the recess below the tongue) is a contributing factor to how prominent the tongue is and how full the mouth is.
- **Large or small muzzles** – look at your horse's head and overall conformation, not just his mouth. A horse with a longer length of face will be able to accommodate restrictive nosebands more easily than one with a small muzzle and face. If nosebands are cramped they may rub, causing the bit to pinch.
- **Low palates** – dished faces can cause a lower palate. Try biting with a mouthpiece that has more than one joint and is designed to sit lower, allowing more room. Bits that are supported in the mouth, such as a hanging cheek or Myler, can be helpful.
- **Sensitive edges to the tongue** – Select bits with a double joint or lozenge instead of a single joint to minimise the squeezing, nutcracker action. Also, look for mouthpieces with designs that relieve the amount of pressure on the side of the tongue.
- **Sensitive bars** – narrow, angular bars will be more susceptible to pressure. Try biting with broader mouthpieces where possible, as this will spread the pressure and aid comfort.



Left: Tongue bulging

Understanding your horse's conformation

Study your horse's face and then look more closely at his mouth. With just a headcollar on, gently part his lips and look from the side. Notice how full or crowded his mouth is. If his tongue bulges out over the bars and onto his teeth then he has a large tongue. Also gently feel along the edge of his bars – are they broad and flat or narrow and fine? How much space is there between the top of his tongue and the roof of his mouth (palate)? Place the bridle and bit on and then look again. Take care not to put your fingers inside his mouth or near his teeth.

Now observe the outside of his face. Is his head long and fine or short and broad? Where is his chin groove in relation to the corners of his mouth? All of these factors will affect the fitting of curb bits, in particular. Does he have a generous amount of space around his muzzle with which to accommodate restrictive nosebands, or not?

If you can, look at lots of horses' mouths as this will enable you to build up a database of comparison in your mind. Make sure to wash your hands between handling each horse to ensure good biosecurity. Always look at the horse's mouth from both sides.

Long, fine face



Short, broad face



Top tips

- Never put your fingers inside your horse's mouth!
- Remember that your horse's conformation, age, stage of training, work, stable management and your ability as a rider are all contributing factors to correct bit selection.
- Bits are best stored in a dry environment.
- Never over-tighten a noseband.
- Bits should be fitted slightly higher or lower in the mouth, depending on whether they are jointed or not. ■



Next issue: Part 2

Tricia explores different mouthpieces, their fitting, uses and how to choose the right one for your individual horse's mouth.



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Horse & Rider

Always warm up and cool down properly to avoid injury. Go to bit.ly/fit-to-ride-extra for our complete guide.

WORKOUT TWO

This workout is designed as a progression from the one we featured in our February issue. If you haven't been following the series, it's a good idea to do an easier variation of these exercises to avoid unnecessary strain and if you're not already following an exercise programme, consult with your doctor to ensure you're fit to participate.



WARM UP

Start by warming up gently with floor exercises, but progress to the more energetic circuit below to really get your blood flowing and your muscles ready. The warm-up should leave you feeling warm, but not too hot.

Cat stretch (10–20 roll throughs)



Spine flexions (10 roll throughs)



Warm-up circuit

Perform with no rest, but at a steady pace.

Bodyweight squats (10 reps)



Bodyweight press ups (10 reps)



Crunches (10 reps)



Top tip

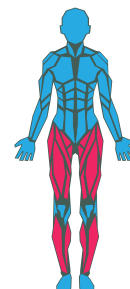
Keep your feet on the ground and try to avoid straining your neck. As long as your shoulders come off the floor, your abdominals will be working.

CIRCUIT ONE

Repeat the circuit three times with no rest between each set. A weight of around 4kg is a good place to start.

Technique

This circuit targets the large muscles in your body, as well as your respiratory and cardiovascular systems.



Side lunges with weights 10 reps (each side)

Step one

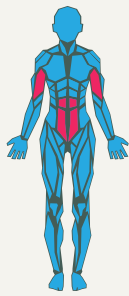
Start with your feet hip width apart, the weights hanging by your sides.



Step two

Step to one side. Keep your toes facing forwards and your feet completely flat on the floor. Sink to one side with your hips back into a squat and keep your chest up, then return to your start position. ➤





Bicep curls on stability ball

10 reps

Step one

Sit on a stability ball – if you don't have one, perform this exercise standing on one leg instead. Allow your arms to

hang by your sides, but don't let them rest on the ball. Pull your tummy muscles in and sit up straight.



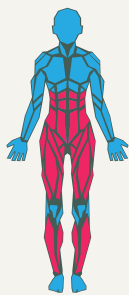
Step two

Bring the weights up to your shoulders, but keep your elbows in line with your spine. Squeeze your biceps and slowly lower the weights back down.



Step three

If you want to make this more difficult, lift one leg and see how it affects your balance. Then try the other leg.



Power star jumps

10 reps

Step one

Crouch down into a squat or, if you're feeling really fit, sink right down so you're touching the floor.



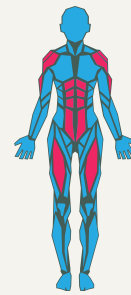
Step two

Spring up and create a star shape with outstretched arms and legs. Land carefully back in the start position.



Coaching points

Focus your eyes on something because it will help you keep your balance. ➤



Step up to shoulder press

10 reps (each side)

Step one

Put one leg onto the step. Bring the weights up to shoulder height, keeping your tummy muscles pulled in.



Step two

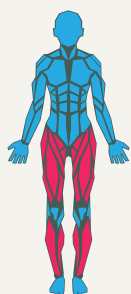
Step up and bring your other knee up to waist height with your toes flexed up towards the ceiling. Take a moment to find your balance.



Step three

Raise your arms so that the weights meet in the middle, directly above your head. Hold the pose for two seconds, drop your elbows to the start position, step off and repeat with the other leg.





Box jumps

10 reps

Step one

Squat in front of a box or a step, keeping your weight in your heels.



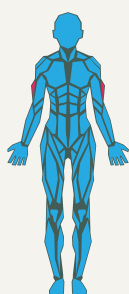
Step two

Jump up, making sure you give the box plenty of room so you don't trip.



Step three

Land on the box in a squat. Jump off and land in a squat again.



Triceps kickbacks

10 reps (each side)

Step one

Rest one hand on a stability ball or chair. Keep your back flat and your tummy pulled in. Lift your elbow so that your forearm hangs towards the ground.



Step two

Using your elbow as a pivot point, swing the weight back and extend your arm as straight as possible to isolate your triceps. Try to keep your chest up and your shoulder blades squeezed together.



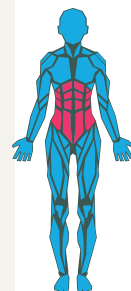
Coaching points

Keep your knees soft and your neck in a straight line with your spine.



CIRCUIT TWO – CORE WORK

This circuit should be repeated twice, with no rest between each set.



Stability ball crunches

12 reps

Step one

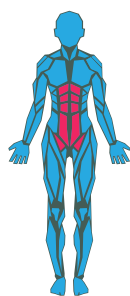
Place the ball in the small of your lower back with your feet hip width apart and your arms across your chest. Keep your neck in line with your spine.



Step two

Contract your abdominals and scoop your pelvis forward so that your bottom lifts away from the ball. Keep your feet firmly planted on the floor. Lift your shoulders off the ball and don't allow the ball to roll backwards. ➤





Bicycles

12 reps

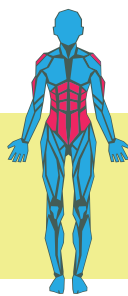
Step one

Put your fingertips on your temples and hold your elbows out to 180°. Bring your left knee to meet your right elbow, and don't allow your right leg to rest on the floor.



Step two

Without resting on the floor, switch sides so that your left leg stretches out and your right knee comes across your body.



Full plank

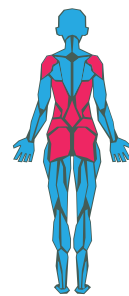
Hold for 30 seconds

Coaching points

If your back begins to sag like in the photo below, go back onto your knees and start again.

Step one

Lift yourself onto your forearms and toes. Keep your head in a straight line and don't allow your hips to drop or your lower back to arch.



Dorsal raises, fingers on temples

12 reps
Step one

Lie face down on the floor with your fingers on your temples.



Step two

Contract your back and bottom muscles to lift your chest and thighs off the floor.



STRETCH

Hold each of these stretches for a minimum of 30 seconds. It should feel uncomfortable, but not painful.



Triceps

Push your elbow down, hold your head up



Hamstrings

Keep your feet flat on the floor



Quadriceps

Keep your knees together



Chest

Squeeze your elbows together behind you



Calves

Front leg straight and lift your toes



Back

Squeeze your knees into your chest



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Age appropriate

Photos: Bob Atkins, Steve Bardens

Whether your golden oldie is taking life easy or putting his younger pals to shame, his needs change as he ages. Follow H&R's tips to keep him in the best shape possible as he grows old gracefully

Do you own a veteran horse? Thanks to advances in veterinary care and improvements in husbandry, more and more of us can answer 'yes' to this question. And yet how well-equipped are you for caring for an older equine?

Turnout

Maximising the time he's turned out for will help to keep your veteran mobile and flexible. However, it's important to think about what company he has. It isn't a good idea to turn him out with youngsters or very boisterous horses, as he's likely to be less able to keep up with the games and may not come off so well from the experience. Instead, choose settled, well-behaved horses who will provide him with company without harassing him.

If he suffers from arthritis, you may find that he is less comfortable in very cold, wet conditions. If that's the case, it's essential that he can move himself out of the wind and wet to somewhere draught-free and dry – for example, a field shelter, wooded area or thick hedge.



Top tips

- Consider waterproof, insulated leg wraps to help keep his extremities warm.
- If his turnout is limited, be creative with ways to keep him flexible and mobile. From in-hand grazing and hand walking to pole exercises and long-reining, there are plenty of ways to help keep him active and free from stiffness.

In the stable

Older joints are often less mobile than younger ones, having experienced years of wear and tear. Your horse will benefit from a non-concussive floor – for example, rubber matting with bedding on top.

Elderly horses often feel the draughts more than younger animals, so while fresh air and good ventilation are essential, consider bigger banks to stop the wind whistling through his stable. You may also want to switch him into a rug with an integrated neck and generous tail flap, too.

Your horse will benefit from a non-concussive floor – for example, rubber matting

Feed

All the while your older horse continues to look well and maintain his condition on his existing diet, there is no need to make significant changes just because he is ageing – the nutritional needs of horses don't alter substantially just because they become older. But there are factors at play that may affect your horse's dietary requirements, including...

- **The condition of his teeth** – thorough chewing of food is an essential part of the digestive process. Worn teeth can affect his ability to chew, meaning he's then unable to extract all the nutrients from his diet.
- **Reduced workload** – if he's no longer working as much as he did before, his energy requirements are likely to be less.



- **Weight gain** – if he's less active but still receiving the same feed.
- **Weight loss** – if he's prone to losing condition, this can be exacerbated by old age. Look for feed with a higher oil content to help him maintain condition without adding excess fizz.

A forage-based diet can provide enough energy for most horses, depending on their workload. In addition, there are many balancers and broad-spectrum supplements specially designed for veteran horses and formulated to support their differing dietary needs.

If his energy requirements mean that you need to feed him a mix or cube to maintain his condition, check the back of the bag to find out what weight of feed is considered a complete ration. Remember, if you're not feeding the full ration, his diet will need supplementing to provide him with all the vitamins and minerals he needs.

Top tips

- Your older horse will benefit from a six-monthly dental check. Wear and tear coupled with the changing angle of his teeth can affect his ability to chew and cause uncomfortable, sharp edges to develop.
- Soaked feeds – for example, grass nuts – are ideal for horses with fewer or worn teeth.
- Don't just guess what feed would be most suitable for your horse – there is expert advice available and the good news is that it's often free of charge. Take advantage of the expertise offered by nutritionists via feed helplines – they'll be able to advise you on the best diet for your horse.
- Feed little and often – why not split his hard feed into more, smaller portions and give part of it in a snack ball? Not only will it slow his eating, but it'll keep him more mobile, too.
- Monitor his water intake – in winter he is likely to drink less and dehydration can have significant health consequences.

Forage

All horses need good-quality forage, and your veteran may benefit from special consideration when it comes to his main fibre source. Worn teeth can find coarse hay hard work to chew – a tell-tale sign is your horse dropping partially chewed lumps of forage from his mouth as he is eating, which is called quidding.

You could consider switching some or all of his hay ration for a bucket feed such as chaff or chopped hay, because it is easier for him to chew and, therefore, digest.

It's important to carefully calculate the weight to ensure he is receiving enough bulk.

Supplements

In addition to any vitamin and mineral supplementation your horse may need, as he ages he may benefit from additional support to maintain, for example, joint mobility and respiratory function. Speak to your vet about the most suitable ingredients to support your particular horse, then shop around for the best product you can afford.



Top tips

- If your horse is reluctant to eat a full feed, consider the benefit of feeding a complete balancer. There is a wide range, including ones specifically designed for older horses and to support those with particular medical conditions.
- Supplements come in many formats, so if your horse is a picky eater, consider different formulas – you can choose from powders, pellets, liquids and even licks.

Rugging

The chances are, if you've had your veteran for a long time that some of his rug wardrobe is more than a few years old. If that's the case, developments in modern rugging may have passed you by. In recent years, investments in technical materials and design have meant that even rugs providing heavyweight protection are lighter and comfier for your horse to wear.

Invest in warm, lightweight, rugs to give him maximum freedom of movement while providing him with the warmth he needs to maintain his condition.

If your horse has a thick coat but is in light work, you may have made the decision not to clip him as much as in previous years. If that's the case, he's likely to become more sweaty when worked, especially on warmer days. A lightweight, technical cooler rug is a must to ensure his coat is dry before rugging him up for the night, reducing the risk of him breaking out under his rug.



Coat care

To clip or not to clip – it's the question that plagues many owners. If his coat is long or he is particularly prone to sweating when worked, it is probably in his best interests to remove some coat – for example, a low trace or bib and belly clip. Excessive sweating can lead to weightloss and electrolyte imbalances, both of which can have an adverse effect on his health.

Unless you have access to a solarium, bathing in the winter is probably out of the question. A good alternative in this instance is to hot cloth him instead.

Top tips

- If you notice changes to your horse's condition or coat, it could indicate a medical condition such as PPID (previously known as Cushing's disease). Speak to your vet, who will be able to advise you on how best to proceed.
- Regular vet checks are particularly beneficial as your horse ages. You can simply book him in for an MOT at the same time as his annual vaccinations.
- Baited stretches are a really good way to maintain flexibility. See *Horse&Rider* January issue p106, or online at horseandrideruk.com



Step-by-step: hot clothing

1. Begin with a thorough groom to remove mud, and as much grease and dirt as possible.
2. Mix a no-rinse wash, a few drops of essential oils or even some Dettol into a bucket of hand-hot water.
3. Squeeze out a flannel well and, beginning behind his ears, rub vigorously in circles to remove as much dirt as possible.
4. Rinse the flannel very regularly to keep it clean and replace the water as needed.
5. Do his legs and under his tail last of all.
6. Refresh the water, but don't add any oils or wash. With a clean flannel, gently wipe his face, ears, around his eyes and his nostrils.
7. Finish with coat shine on

his body (avoiding under his saddle, but with an extra spray on elbows, knees and hocks). This helps to stop mud and dirt sticking to his coat, and keeps him looking his best.

8. Put a cooler or day rug on him until his coat is completely dry, then go over his coat with a soft brush to remove water marks and bring out the shine. ■

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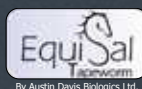
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Wellbeing

A can of worms

Confused about how to worm, when to worm and what with? We don't blame you! Carrying out faecal worm egg counts is key to an effective worming programme, here's how to go about it

You might be wondering why you're being advised to scrap the three-monthly worming regime you've always used. After all, it's worked well up until now. Hasn't it? In the 1960s, it was discovered that some equine intestinal parasites were not being killed off by a routine dose of wormer – something known as wormer resistance. Since then, the problem has spiralled and today there is resistance to every class of wormer available in the UK.

The problem of wormer resistance is very similar to the issue of antibiotic resistance that we are seeing throughout human and equine medicine. Resistance to wormers has occurred because we have been worming our horses more frequently than necessary, we haven't been weighing our horses beforehand so they often receive too little of the drug, and because we haven't been checking which type of worm

is inhabiting our horses, so the chances are we've been administering the wrong type of wormer, too.

At the moment, there is a hugely limited number of worming products on the market and there are no new ones on the horizon. So, if we don't do what we can to protect the efficacy of the drugs that are still killing some worms, we could find ourselves in a situation where we are unable to protect our horses from these dangerous pests at all.

A heavy worm burden can cause significant damage to your horse's internal organs and intestines, and can be fatal. Imagine a scenario where your horse is carrying enough worms to kill him, yet there is absolutely nothing you can do to help him. If wormer resistance continues to develop in the way it has been, this is a situation many of us are likely to face, which is why we must change the way we do things – now. ➤



“Imagine a scenario where your horse is carrying enough worms to kill him, yet there is absolutely nothing you can do to help him”

“A huge part of preventing wormer resistance is only worming when he needs it”



A new strategy

A huge part of preventing wormer resistance is only worming your horse when he needs it. To do this, you need to perform regular faecal worm egg counts to decipher whether your horse actually needs worming and, if he does, what type of worms need targeting.

Once you have the results of the test, which is usually a day after submission, your vet will be able to advise whether you need to worm and with what drug. Then you just need to weigh your horse with a weigh tape or on a weighbridge to ensure he receives the correct dose – simple!



When to test

How often you should carry out a worm egg count depends on your horse and his stabling situation. In a static population – where horses rarely move to and from the yard – with good pasture management, it's recommended that you begin by testing every three months, which can then be spread out to every 4–6 months depending on the results and advice from your vet. If your horse is on a large yard with lots of movement, you should begin by testing every 2–3 months, then decrease this to 3–4 months.



How to collect your sample

The faecal sample should be less than 12 hours old when you collect it. If your horse lives in, it's simple enough to collect the sample when you muck him out. But if he lives out, particularly with others, it can be trickier, as you may not be sure how fresh it is or certain whether the dropping belongs to your horse. If he lives out alone, completely clear the field of poo and return within 12 hours, and you'll get yourself a fresh sample. If he lives out with others, it may be necessary to bring him in until he has passed a dropping.



You only need to collect a tennis ball-sized amount of poo. Pop it into a plastic bag, push all the air out and seal it, then keep it refrigerated until you can drop it off at your veterinary practice or post it to a reputable lab – your sample should be less than two days old when you submit it.

Although it's not essential, it's advisable to test all the horses on your yard at the same time. Not all the horses on the same pasture will have a similar result, so testing them together will give you a good picture of who are the main carriers, plus testing all horses at the same time will make monitoring the situation easier.

Put to the test

Once in the lab, the technicians will mix your horse's faeces with a flotation medium (1a, b and c), creating a liquid. The large fibres are then strained off (2) and some of the remaining liquid mounted on a slide (3), ready to be examined under a microscope (4a and b). The number of eggs are counted and the technician will work out how many eggs per gramme (epg) the sample contains.

The results can vary slightly depending how many eggs your horse is shedding at the time, but the test has proven to be very reliable. A result of less than 200epg is considered low, 200–1,200epg a medium burden and over 1,200epg a high burden. It is natural for a horse to have a low worm burden and actually, this has been shown to be beneficial at reducing the rate of resistance, so a result of fewer than 200epg is acceptable and your horse won't need treating. Anything over 200epg and your horse will need worming, but it's important to discuss which wormer your horse needs with your vet.

Top tip

Always talk to your vet or a Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) before embarking on a new worming programme or making changes to an existing one.

Exception to the rule

Although a faecal worm egg count is a vital part of your worming regime, it does have its limitations, because it doesn't highlight tapeworm and encysted small redworm burdens.

Tapeworm eggs are visible in faecal samples, but they are shed intermittently, so detecting them in this way isn't reliable – the test may show negative, yet your horse may have a significant tapeworm burden. However, tapeworms can be tested for using a blood test called the tapeworm ELISA, which detects antibodies to tapeworm. It doesn't confirm the current tapeworm burden, just whether your horse has been exposed to these worms in the last 4–5 months and whether he has had a low, moderate or high burden.

The tapeworm ELISA test accurately highlights horses with a moderate or high reading who need treating, but is not so accurate when it comes to deciphering whether horses have a low count or no worms at all. However, horses with a low count do not need treating, so the test works well for the purpose of finding out whether to worm your horse or not.

There is also a saliva test for tapeworm available, but the scientific data for this test is yet to be published, so it's difficult to say how reliable it is.

Encysted small redworm are too immature to produce eggs, so their presence can't be detected at all by a worm egg count and, unfortunately, there aren't any tests available that highlight their presence.

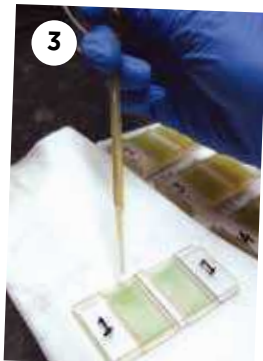
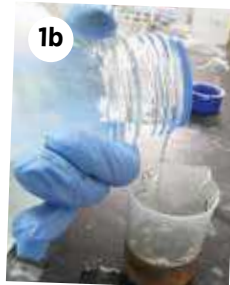
While it's recommended that you test for tapeworm before giving a wormer, you can simply worm for tapeworm routinely each year without performing a test. If you decide to do this, treat your horse for tapeworm once or twice a year in spring and autumn – how often depends on your horse's management and veterinary history, but your vet will be able to advise you. It's also essential to treat for encysted small redworm once a year during the winter.

Good for your horse and your pocket

Surprisingly, the majority of horses have a very low worm burden and only a few have a level of worms high enough to need treating. Therefore, the chances are a worm egg count will show that your horse does not need worming at all. So, by performing a worm egg count, not only are you avoiding giving your horse drugs unnecessarily and helping to reduce wormer resistance, you'll be saving money, too!

Good worming guide

- Carry out a worm egg count every three months and only worm your horse if the results say you need to.
- Test for tapeworm in March and October and treat if necessary. Alternatively, routinely treat for tapeworm in March and October.
- Routinely worm for encysted small redworm in December. ■



Wellbeing news

{ NEWS STORY }

Up in the air

In recent years, questions have been raised regarding the potential effectiveness for air jackets to prevent serious injuries and fatalities, and with 45 rotational falls recorded on British Eventing cross-country courses between July 2013 and June 2014, many called for them to be made compulsory. However, how effective they are at protecting against crush injuries is less well understood.

The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) carried out a study to investigate the forces involved in such an event. A series of controlled tests, that involved dropping a dead horse onto a crash test dummy wearing a body protector and air jacket, were carried out to investigate the risk of a serious chest injury – for example, a minor laceration of the aorta or multiple rib and sternum fractures, which could lead to suffocation if not treated promptly.

The results showed that the air jacket slightly reduced the compression of the dummy's chest



and subsequently the predicted risk of severe chest injury fell from 94% to 81%. This means that it could have a beneficial effect in reducing the likelihood of severe injury from a horse falling on a rider. However, there is still a high probability of riders sustaining a severe injury, even when wearing the air jacket, and it is unlikely to prevent a fatality if a horse fell directly onto a rider.

{ RESEARCH }

Stem cell solution

Stem cells – cells that can turn into a variety of different cell types – have been used to help improve healing in equine injuries for some time. However, a team of biologists has discovered why the mycotoxin cytochalasin D turns stem cells into bone cells instead of fat cells. They also discovered that when stem cells are injected with cytochalasin D, abundant bone formation occurs within just one week. This research could prove very useful for developing treatments for bone loss and jump starting local bone formation in horses.



{ RESEARCH }

Letting off steam

As many of us have experienced at some point, when horses have pent up energy, they can be prone to difficult behaviour such as bucking, jogging and spooking. Australian researchers looked into the effect of exercise on stabled horses' behaviour and they have confirmed that a little exercise helps horses to be more co-operative and behave more calmly.

Each stabled horse received an hour of exercise a day, which consisted of turnout or recreational riding, or a session on a treadmill or walker. On days without exercise, horses were moved

from their stables for an hour a day for a change of scenery, but not allowed to exercise. Every horse was turned out for a 15-minute session each day while their behaviour was monitored.

The results showed that an hour's exercise each day left the horses significantly more co-operative and less reactive, which is likely to have a positive effect on their welfare and the safety of their handlers. When looking at the different types of exercise, free turnout appeared to be the most effective for calm behaviour.

{ RESEARCH }

Food fight

Because we keep horses in much smaller areas than they would live in in the wild, aggression between horses over resources such as food are common. This is because in the wild, horses have free access to food, for example, but the food we provide is limited, leading horses to feel the need to compete for it.

Brazilian researchers conducted a study to find out what factors reduce aggression at feeding time. They experimented with the distance between the feed buckets, the height the buckets were placed at and the number of feed buckets, and they tested the horses when eating together was new to them and again once relationships had been established.

The results showed that a distance of at least 10 metres between feed buckets reduced aggressive behaviour in all situations. Before the horses were used to eating together, raising the buckets to 0.71m off the ground and providing more buckets than horses reduced aggression. However, once the horses got to know each other better the opposite was true, with fewer buckets per horse and placing the buckets at ground level reducing this behaviour.



ACT NOW

DON'T LET ENCYSTED SMALL
REDWORM GO UNTREATED



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Hidden within the gut wall, encysted small redworm (ESRW) larvae can account for up to 90% of the redworm burden in your horse.¹

Sudden mass emergence in Spring can cause diarrhoea and colic.² This disease is known as larval cyathostominosis, which has a mortality rate of up to 50%.¹ Every horse at risk should be treated for encysted small redworm in late Autumn or Winter.



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Blipp the Trojan Horse or visit www.esrw.co.uk to test your knowledge on ESRW and speak to your vet or SQP about responsible worm control.

Picking a NEW pathway

*If you're interested in making horses more than a hobby,
Horse&Rider has researched your options*

Within the equine industry, there's a wide range of opportunities when it comes to careers and there are some that you might not have considered yet. But before you start thinking about researching the qualifications you'll need, it's important to have a clear end goal. Be realistic. If you can't stand the thought of long days out in the cold over winter, then training to be a groom might not be for you. Likewise, if putting pen to paper is not your strong point, take a closer look at a more practical career path. Here's what you need to consider...





Levels of education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are eight levels of education. There is a similar framework in Scotland, but split between 12 levels. The level at which you can enter education depends on your previous qualifications. As a general rule, you can enter at the level above your previous completion – for example, if you have completed qualifications at level two (for

example, GCSEs at A*–C) you can enter at level three. However, in some exceptional cases, dependent on your experience and the requirements of the learning provider, you may be able to enter at a higher level. At some levels you can do an award, certificate or diploma. These are different-sized qualifications, rather than of differing difficulty, with more modules to complete over a longer time, allowing you to progress further.

Questions to ask yourself...

- ☒ What are you interested in?
- ☒ What are your strengths?
- ☒ What can you realistically see yourself doing in the future?
- ☒ Would you prefer to study at college or university, or are you more suited to learning on the job in a practical environment?
- ☒ What academic and practical experience do you already have?
- ☒ How much time do you have to commit to qualifying for your new career?
- ☒ Do you need to work alongside training or studying?

When you've compiled some criteria of what might work for you, it's time to start investigating different qualifications and educational pathways.

Types of qualifications

Work-based qualifications include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and City & Guilds, and you can study for these at college, normally alongside working. Dependent on the course, you will be assessed on a continuous basis in the workplace or by submitting assignments.

If you're looking for an option that equips you with the knowledge and practical skills necessary for working in an equestrian establishment or practical environment such as saddlery, this is a route worth considering.

Academic qualifications are available at every education level, ranging from the First Certificate at level one to a Doctorate at level eight. In between these levels you can study for numerous qualifications including National Diplomas, Foundation

Degrees and Bachelor Degrees. At each level, the proportion of academic study, work-based learning and practical skill development varies.

If you plan to venture into the worlds of equine nutrition, physiotherapy or behaviour, then these qualifications are a good place to start, but you may have to do some more specialist training further down the line.

Completing your **BHS stages** is a good option if you're looking to gain recognised qualifications in practical horsemanship. There are four stages that assess your horse knowledge, care and riding. You can also take your teaching tests that assess your ability to coach groups and individuals. There are further BHS exams that you can take following these if you would like to specialise in coaching or management.

How you can do them...



College and university

You can study all sorts of equine-related courses at college and university, ranging from Equine Management to more specific courses such as Equine Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation or Equine Performance and Business Management. Often, but not always, the campuses are land-based with horses on site, which means you will have more opportunity for practical learning with horses.

Most colleges and universities have a yearly intake each September and you can apply either directly to the college or via UCAS for either full-time or part-time courses. You can study at any level at college, from entry level to gain basic skills and confidence, all the way up to getting a Doctorate at level eight.



If you're aged 16–18, you should be able to attend college without paying tuition fees. However, if you are aged 19–23, you may have to pay for tuition fees dependent on your situation and current level of education. Over the age of 24, if you're taking a course at level three or four you can apply for a loan to cover the tuition fees. It is best to check directly with the individual learning provider how much your course is going to cost and whether you are eligible for any financial assistance.

Distance learning

If attending a college on a regular full-time or part-time basis isn't practical for you, then it is possible to enrol in a distance learning course. You complete the course of study in your own time and away from college, and submit assignments online or via post to your tutor for marking. It's possible to do BTECs, City & Guilds and BHS-approved courses via this method.





Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a great way to combine practical training with study, and you'll be paid the national minimum apprentice wage at the same time. You will get to work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills, while studying towards a related qualification. Examples include farriery and apprentice jockey.

There are two levels of equine apprenticeships – intermediate (equivalent to level two) and advanced (equivalent to level three). Dependent on the level, apprenticeships can take one to four years to complete and anyone aged 16 or over can apply. There are a number of organisations that offer apprenticeships and you can apply to them directly.



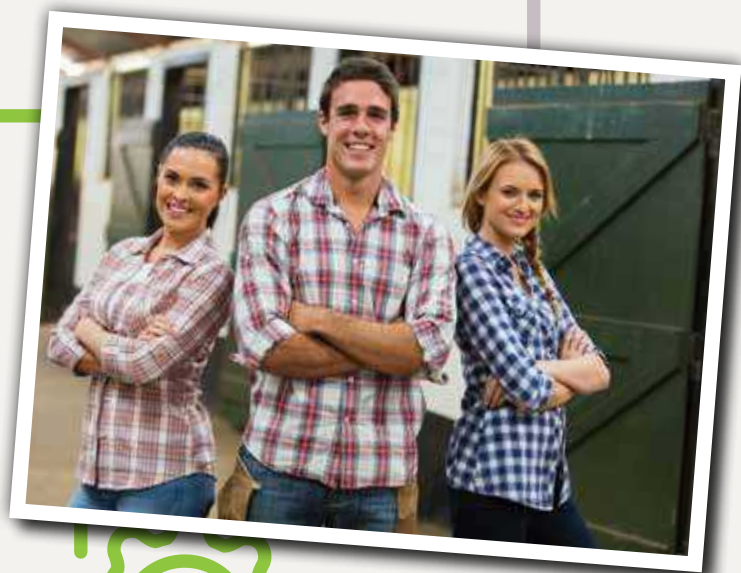
Moving forward

When you have decided on the route that suits you, take time to research different learning providers. For example, if you want to go to college or university and you're not restricted by location, there are many different options to choose from, and each one will have slightly different course subjects, content and methods of assessment. Remember that while some courses have two or more intakes a year, others only have one, so when you start researching make sure you plan in advance. ■



Become a working pupil

Employment as a working pupil allows you to train and gain experience in a working environment, and be paid to work at the same time. Unlike being an apprentice, is not a government-regulated scheme, so rather than gaining an NVQ or similar qualification while you're working, you are more likely to be given training towards your BHS stages. You must pass each exam to progress on to the next one and you can take the exams at one of 84 approved centres. The exams cost from £165. Choose a BHS- or ABRIS-approved yard to be sure of high-quality tuition.



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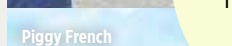
Lynn Russell



Louise Bell



Steve Wallace



Piggy French



Jo Jackson



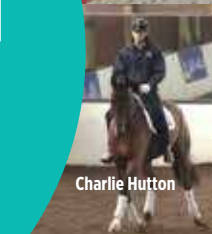
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£150 AND OVER



1



2



3



4

1. Pikeur Salima

Colours: Navy, jet black or berry

Sizes: 34-46

RRP £199.96

pikeur-shop.de

PROS: "I like the style of this jacket, especially the detailing on the sleeves and the warm collar. The fabric is lightweight and breathable, and the fit is perfect."

CONS: "I would have preferred it to be longer."

If you like to layer, this jacket is ideal.



2. Cavallo Faye

Colours: Blueprint or truffle

Sizes: 34-46

RRP £175

zebraproducts.co.uk

PROS: "It's really warm and comfortable with lots of fill, but still feels light. It's great for dog walking, too, as it has so many pockets. The material is resilient and effective for yard jobs."

CONS: "Hay gets stuck to the fleecy cuffs and, unless you tuck them away, they get wet."

Perfect for wrapping up against the cold weather.



3. Mountain Horse Windsor

Colours: Navy, black or brown

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £169.95

mountainhorse.co.uk

PROS: "The fit is sublime. It's tapered at the back so it's flattering and is comfy to ride in. The high collar kept my neck warm and dry."

CONS: "It's easy to get confused and try to open the zip to the pocket rather than the main zip, as they're located next to each other."

A well-designed, quality riding jacket.



4. Baleno Kensington

Colours: Camel, pine green or navy

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £169.95

baleno.be

PROS: "It's a really smart, elegant coat. The fabric was soft, not rustly like most long waterproof coats, which was great as my horse is a youngster so I was worried about it upsetting him."

CONS: "I wish the outer pockets zipped up - they have a single popper, which made me feel hesitant about putting anything valuable in them when out riding."

Stay dry and elegant from head to toe.



Stowable hood



Removable hood



Vents



Two-way zip

5. HV Polo Heather

Sizes: XS-XL

RRP £161.95

countryandstable.co.uk

PROS: "The two-way pockets are brilliant, and keep your hands warm and your items separate. I really love the look and style, too. I think it's exceptionally good value for money. The material is really durable and smart. The vented bottom means that it's comfortable in the saddle."

CONS: "The thick material makes it quite heavy to ride in."

Perfect for when the temperature drops.



6. Evolution Insulated

Colours: Navy or black

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £159.95

nobleoutfitters.co.uk

PROS: "I bathed my horse and got the jacket completely drenched, but no water ran up the sleeves and the fabric remained watertight. It's stylish and the quality is fab."

CONS: "I was surprised to find that the zipper is on the right, not the left, which is unusual for a woman's jacket and took a while to get used to."

You want to look stylish and remain bone dry.



7. Ariat Burney

Sizes: XS-XL

RRP £149.99

ariat.com

PROS: "I really like the fit and the drawstring waist. The zip pockets are secure and roomy. I also like that it is lightweight, so it keeps me dry but not too hot when schooling."

CONS: "The hood is big, so it doesn't stay up when it's windy."

For those needing a smart and functional yard coat.



8. PK Grafiek

Colours: Peacoat or coffee

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £149

zebraproducts.co.uk

PROS: "I like the high collar because it kept my hair dry when I had my riding hat on, and the outside breast pocket was easier to get my phone from than inside the jacket. It was really warm and dry."

CONS: "I thought it came up a little small in size and I did manage to pull off a zip tag, but the zip remained intact."

Keep warm and dry in this stylish number.



£150 AND OVER



£99 – £150



£99 – £150



9



10



11



12

9. Toggi Clementine

Sizes: 8–20

RRP £130

toggi.com

PROS: “This jacket is easy to move in and a good fit. The extra length is brilliant, especially when washing buckets or filling haynets, because it doesn’t leave your back exposed.”

CONS: “The sleeves are thinner than the rest of the coat, so in cold weather a jumper is a must.”

Perfect if you prefer a longer length jacket.



10. Equi-Thème King

Sizes: S–XL

RRP £119.90

equi-theme.com

PROS: “The jacket is 100% waterproof, very comfortable and keeps me warm. I love the size of the pockets, and that it’s not too big and bulky for riding in. The high collar is really nice.”

CONS: “I would have preferred a jacket with a hood and I would have liked to see a few more technical features for the money.”

Perfect for the yard fashionista!

11. Townend Tie Performance

Colours: Black/rocco red or navy/honeysuckle

Sizes: 8–16

RRP £99

townenddirect.com

PROS: “I love the extended neoprene-type cuff because it stopped water running up the sleeve when washing my horse. The material is really waterproof and doesn’t show any stable dirt.”

CONS: “I prefer a fitted shape.”

Perfect to be layered with a gilet.



12. Horka Outdoor Canyon

Sizes: XS–XXXL

RRP £109.95

horka.com

PROS: “I really like that it’s not too heavy, but it’s still warm. I don’t heat up while riding in it. I also really like the adjustable waist cord so the jacket has some shape to it and is flattering.”

CONS: “I would prefer adjustable wrists so that water doesn’t run up the sleeve when washing my horse off.”

If you like a slightly longer coat that stands up to yard life well.



Stowable hood



Removable hood



Vents



Two-way zip

13. Just Togs Vermont

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £95

justtogs.co.uk

PROS: "I like the shape and the silver detail against the charcoal. The zip tags are a good size to use even when wearing gloves. It washes well, dries quickly and shavings don't stick to it."

CONS: "In heavy rain, the inside of the pockets got a little bit wet."

If you like a bit of bling, even in miserable weather.



14. Jack Murphy Abbeyville

Colours: Rhubarb crumble, vintage teal or pitch black

Sizes: 8-20

RRP £94.99

jackmurphy.eu

PROS: "I love the shape and it's easy to wear thicker jumpers underneath. It's also a good length for riding, keeping the rain out very well."

CONS: "There's a lovely fleece lining in the body of the jacket and in the pockets, but I was really disappointed that the sleeves weren't lined and it meant my wrists got wet. The fabric picks up dust easily, but looked really smart when it was clean."

Great for wearing to the pub or the yard.



15. Horseware Brianna

Colours: Navy or earth brown

Sizes: XXS-XXL

RRP £87.95

horseware.com

PROS: "I liked that the sleeves were a little on the long side so when my arms were bent while riding, my wrists still got good coverage. It was really snug around my neck, which is great for keeping out draughts and light rain. The fabric is good for a water-resistant jacket."

CONS: "The opening to the pockets is quite tight but at least things didn't fall out."

Ideal for light rain and layering.



16. Shires Team Field

Colours: Black or petrol

Sizes: XS-XL

RRP £79.99

shiresequestrian.com

PROS: "I wore this jacket hacking in horrid weather and remained bone dry in it. The pockets are large, secure and waterproof."

CONS: "I find the style practical, but a little plain, and the articulated sleeves didn't seem to do anything."

Ideal if you want a simple, but practical yard coat.



UNDER £99



UNDER £99



17



18



19



20

17. Bridleway Yukon

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £54.95

bridlewayequestrian.com

PROS: "The length is perfect, offering head-to-toe protection while not being too heavy. It dries quickly, too, and the price is unbeatable. It's lightweight, easy to move in and really warm. I love it!"

CONS: "None."

Lightweight rain protection without breaking the bank.



18. Horze Supreme Lianna Club

Colours: Black, navy or brown

Sizes: 34-46

RRP £50.99

horze.co.uk

PROS: "I like this jacket a lot. It's warm but not bulky, allowing for layers to be worn underneath. It's extremely good in wet weather and the fabric is ideal for the yard."

CONS: "In my opinion, the thumb loop cuffs are a bit of a pain when riding and working on the yard because they get grubby quite quickly."

A yard jacket for all seasons.



19. Felix Bühler Functional Spirit

Colours: Navy or cobalt

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £44

kraemer.de

PROS: "I really like the material – it doesn't let the rain soak in, so never feels damp or heavy. I like the adjustable wrists, too. The inside zip pocket is really useful for carrying your keys, mobile and wallet without the worry you'll lose them."

CONS: "The hood is far too big. I have to pull the cords very tight to gather it in, but even this isn't enough to make it fit snugly."

A remarkable price for a reliable waterproof.



20. Fouganza blouson

Colours: Brown or black

Sizes: XS-XXL

RRP £39.99

decathlon.co.uk

PROS: "I loved the style with matching jersey ribbed knit at the waist and cuffs. It fitted nicely and was comfortable. I like that it's not too bulky, so I don't get hot while riding."

CONS: "The hood needs to be slightly bigger, as it slips back off my head. The fabric at the wrists and waist gets quite wet, but the jacket keeps me dry."

Buy if you want a versatile jacket.



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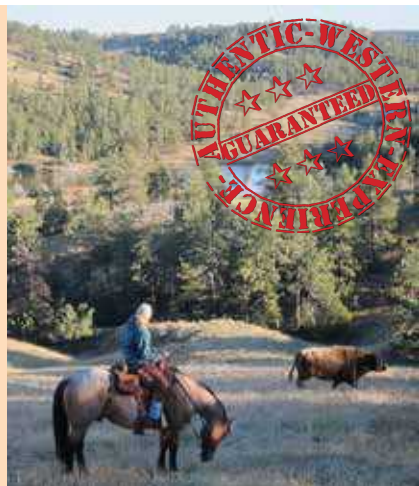
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See page 149 for
more holidays

Horse AND Rider
magazine

Rides on the Wild Side

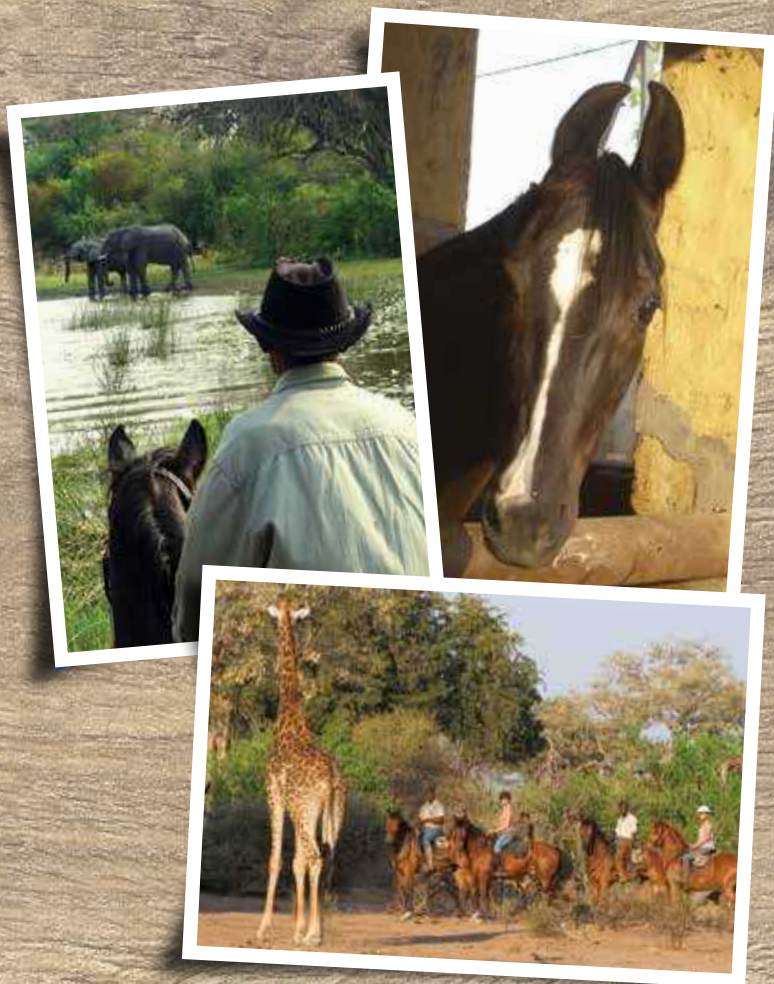
Handpicked Horseback
Adventures Worldwide

For unbiased,
expert advice on horseback safaris
and holidays

Email: rides@ridesonthewildside.com

Web: www.ridesonthewildside.com

Skype: dany.hancock



Home and away

The choice of equestrian holidays in the UK and abroad is staggering. Charlotte Anderson helps you choose the perfect trip

Whether it's galloping along a beach in Spain or watching elephants and zebras on the plains of Africa, taking an equestrian holiday can be the realisation of your childhood dreams. But you need not leave British soil to experience some incredible riding, and what you save on flights you can spend on your horse or yourself. Decide what suits you with our holiday destination guide. ➤

Equestrian holidays abroad

Riding abroad is a treat, and often an opportunity to improve your riding skills or simply enjoy some beautiful countryside that is a far cry from your usual hacking routes. With lots of equine-specific travel providers, finding a package that will suit your needs and your budget means knowing what you want from a holiday in advance to ensure you get the most enjoyable trip and the best value for your money.

Always take your own riding hat and if you're flying, pack it in your hand luggage so that it doesn't get damaged. It might be worth investing in a hard travel case for it, too.

Whether you're choosing a holiday in the UK or abroad, make sure your insurance policy covers you for every aspect of the trip.

Don't forget good-quality fly repellent to protect you from biting insects.

How do you pick a holiday?

Once you've decided what type of holiday you might be interested in, it's important to consider the finer details. We've listed a few of the things to consider when making your decision.

Is it important that your guide or trainer speaks fluent English? It might not matter if you're simply trekking, as long as he or she can help you order a beer at the bar! If you're having a week's worth of training, however, missing vital information because of a language barrier will be very annoying.

Do you want to do anything but ride? Perhaps you don't want to ride all day, and you'd rather have a short ride and lounge by the pool or go sightseeing in

the afternoons. Speak to your travel agent about the destinations you're considering and enquire about the flexibility of the itinerary before you commit.

Do you want to be involved in the care of your mount? If you're used to looking after your own horse everyday, it might be a nice treat to have someone tend to the horses while you drink prosecco on the balcony.

How long do you want to ride for each day? The length of a day varies greatly from place to place and it's important that you're fit enough to enjoy all the riding. Don't underestimate the effect that sitting in the saddle for long periods of time can have on your knees, hips, lower back and ankles. Don't be put off by this, however,

because you may be able to walk for some of the route, which will give your knees and hips a chance for a break.

What sort of weather would you like to ride in? The benefit of a riding holiday abroad is that the weather is likely to be more predictable. Riding in glorious sunshine is something British riders often dream about, but it's important to be prepared. Being sunburnt while riding isn't much fun, so having adequate protection in the form of clothing and creams is vital.

What type of cuisine do you enjoy? The catering on riding holidays can range from saddlebag picnics to haute cuisine three-course meals. If food and fine dining

What types of riding holiday abroad are there?



CAMPING EXPEDITION



HORSEBACK SAFARI



TREKS STAYING AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS



BEACH RIDE

TREKS FROM A SINGLE LOCATION



is important to you, there'll be a wide variety of holidays to suit your every whim, but check the details first rather than be disappointed later.

How capable a rider are you? Spending a week being held back because someone has over-exaggerated their riding ability is frustrating to other riders in the group, and potentially dangerous. Be honest with yourself and the resort about the sort of horse you could ride.

What type of riding do you want to do? Picking something that's going to keep you interested is important. Even if your mount is less than exciting, riding through spectacular scenery only accessible by horse is likely to make up for it.

Who would you like to ride with? One of the best things about a riding holiday is meeting new, like-minded people, but if you'd rather ride with one or two friends and a guide, you're likely to pay more.

What sort of accommodation do you require? Do you dream of camping alongside your horse, or a hot tub on a rooftop followed by falling asleep in a luxury four-poster? Knowing in advance will help you pick the best destination.

What creature comforts do you need in order to have a good time? I was guiding a trip in Spain when half-way through the first day a guest revealed that she wasn't able to pee behind a bush. Her riding holiday ended there because there were

no facilities along the route. Let that be a lesson to you all!

Do you want to ride the same horse for the duration? If you're trekking from a centre and not returning until the end of your trip, it's likely that you'll be assigned one horse. If you're training or staying at the centre, there's likely to be more flexibility, so if you want to ride different horses it might be a better bet.

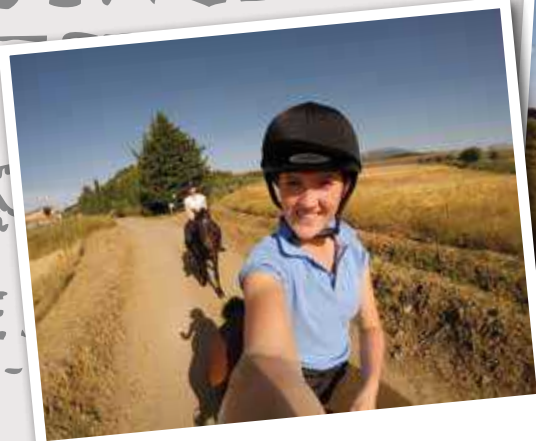
What sort of horse do you want to ride? If you're used to riding a 17hh warmblood, are you going to be happy riding a 14hh Icelandic or a lean Argentinian polo pony? Sometimes a change is as good as a rest, but research your options before committing. ➤



TRAINING HOLIDAY

ALTERNATIVE
THERAPY COURSERANCH
EXPERIENCELEARN TO PLAY
POLO TRIPHORSEMANSHIP
WORKSHOP

ADVENTURE RACE



A holiday in Spain was enough of a treat for Horse&Rider's Sophie Rigby, but spending it at Cortijo Las Minas with Dorcas and her team of horses was an experience she'll never forget.

A short flight from Gatwick to Malaga was all it took to land me in bright sunshine ready for my four-day riding adventure on the Cortijo Las Minas Health with Horses programme.

I was met off the plane by Scottish expat, and owner and instructor, Dorcas, who whisked me off on an evening hack through miles of dusty olive groves in 30°C sunshine. Up bright and early, and after a delicious traditional Andalucian breakfast of toasted bread and conserves with fresh fruit, I headed back to the yard. With the heat already building, I was assigned my horse for the first schooling session of the trip, a gorgeous 13-year-old PRE X Arab mare called Chenoa and, under Dorcas' watchful eye, I worked on my posture, with tailored exercises to correct issues.

After lunch, I headed into the local town for a yoga session. As I'm not particularly flexible, I was unsure how I'd get on, but an hour later, feeling completely relaxed and stretched, I headed back to the yard for an evening hack before dinner. This time I rode gorgeous five-year-old homebred PRE mare called Milana.

The next morning, my lesson began with Dorcas guiding me through a series of simple stretching and flexion exercises to help me understand the concept of balance on the horse's back. After wobbling and nearly falling off a fair few times, I got the hang of things. With the temperature soaring way above 30°C,

after a short break Dorcas focused her attention on my position with a lunge lesson to develop the balance work we'd already begun. Taking away my stirrups and reins (much to my horror!), I attempted to complete the same stretching exercises in walk, trot and canter. I had a feeling that Dorcas would pick up on my fear of letting go and was worried about working in canter without anything to hold on to, but my mount was a saint and, after the initial stomach-churning 'I'm out of control' sensation, I was absolutely fine!

Time for some R&R

Embracing the health aspect of the trip, I spent the afternoon at an idyllic and breathtaking spa, reflecting on how much my riding had improved already and the time I'd spent at Cortijo Las Minas so far, while relaxing in a sun-drenched hot tub.

But as all horsey girls will know, there's only so much chilling out you can do before the appeal of a yard full of gorgeous horses and stunning scenery to explore becomes just too much. So, as the day began to cool a little it was back into the saddle for the now-traditional evening ride. We headed out down the lane towards what sounded like some sort of music festival. Turning the corner, we realised it was, in fact, the local goat herder with a herd of more than 100 goats, all following him down the lane.

The final day began with another gorgeous Spanish breakfast, and I had the pleasure of having a play in the school on Milana. I decided I was happy to leave all my belongings behind if I could squeeze her into my suitcase instead! It was great to put the new adjustments to my position into practise and play around with lateral work under Dorcas' watchful eye. She was full of praise for my improved posture.

That evening, after another relaxing afternoon spent by the pool, we tacked up and headed out on a trail ride. Dorcas led me through gorgeous countryside paths and olive groves, with plenty of opportunities for long, open canters and to really let the horses enjoy themselves. The scenery around every corner seemed to be more breathtaking than the last and I could have stayed out for hours. Three hours' later, with slightly numb bums, we headed back towards home. Putting the horses away for the final time was more emotional than I had expected – I simply didn't want to leave. The gorgeous Spanish countryside and the horses had certainly placed themselves firmly in my heart. Not to mention Dorcas, who was the ultimate caring, attentive and inspirational host and instructor throughout my stay.

Putting the horses away for the final time was more emotional than I had expected – I simply didn't want to leave



Equestrian holidays in the UK

The UK is undoubtedly a brilliant destination for a riding holiday due to our spectacular scenery and magnificent network of bridleways, if you're willing to seek out the right places and risk the changeable British climate. One of the benefits of taking a riding holiday in the UK is that it's easy to take your own horse.

Reasons to take your horse with you...

- Going on holiday with him can be an excellent way to bond with each other and spend time doing things that you don't normally do.
- If you're going on a training holiday, you can further his education at the same time as your own.
- If he's young, it's a great way to introduce him to a variety of experiences.
- If your normal hacking is limited, taking your horse somewhere you can really enjoy the countryside is a real treat.
- It's nice to have him in your holiday snaps, rather than a horse you might never see again.
- If you have to pay for someone to care for him in your absence, it can make your holiday really expensive to leave him at home.
- You'll miss him!

Reasons to leave your horse at home...

- He might not be suitable for the holiday of your choice. If you want to go trekking and he hates hacking, you might regret taking him.
- If he's not used to travelling or staying away from home, he might find it stressful.
- You don't have to do the day-to-day horse care if you choose not to, which might be a nice break from the norm.
- It's nice to ride different horses every now and then, especially if yours doesn't excel at your chosen holiday pursuit.
- It's a good opportunity to give him a holiday, too.
- If he's injured, it's a great way to get your riding fix while he recovers.
- It's a good opportunity to experience something new. It could be Western riding, polo or even just a higher level of your chosen discipline, and there's no reason to be held back by your horse!
- You might miss him, but he's unlikely to even notice you're gone.



Take a staycation

The British Isles are a goldmine of incredible riding and by holidaying within the UK, you're also helping boost our economy. Check out these incredible destinations within the UK...

1. THE BRECON BEACONS IN WALES
2. THE PEAK DISTRICT IN ENGLAND
3. THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS
4. COUNTY ANTRIM IN NORTHERN IRELAND
5. THE NEW FOREST IN ENGLAND
6. THE BLACK MOUNTAINS IN WALES
7. DARTMOOR IN ENGLAND



Whatever type of holiday you choose, knowing what to expect and being prepared will ensure you get the most from your trip. Internet forums, holiday review websites and riding holiday exhibitions are a great way to speak to people who've been to the resort before. ■



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And your horse



Beautiful 150 acre
private estate



Brand new
60x25 school

This month we Love...

Take a look at some of our favourite horsey products this month



Slow Release Condition and Competition mix from Baileys is high in fibre and oil, and delivers digestible, slow-release calories with reduced starch levels, and contains Yea-Sacc and Digest Plus to promote digestive efficiency.

RRP £13.75 for 20kg
baileyshorsefeeds.co.uk



The **Smart Show Jumping boots** from Woof Wear are designed to absorb high-speed impact, as well as being soft and flexible.

Colours: Black or white
Sizes: S/M or L/XL
RRP Tendon boots £60, Fetlock boots £40
woofwear.com

Fine Fettle Tonic provides a range of beneficial nutrients and is an excellent source of natural iron.

RRP £95 for 2kg
finefettlefeed.com



The **Childéric Spring 40 tote bag** features soft leather, reinforced detailing on the base and sides, and contrast stitching around the central seam. Personalisation options allow you to create a unique bag to suit your individual style.

RRP from £567
Colours: more than 25 available
childericsaddles.co.uk



“Create a bag as unique as you and be the envy of your friends”

Manufactured in the UK using industrial-strength materials, the **Stable and Barn tack trolley** has pneumatic tyres that make it suitable for all terrains, and plenty of room for all your horsey kit.

RRP £289
stableandbarn.co.uk





This month we
love...

The **Elico memory foam girth** features a memory foam inner, allowing it to follow the contours of your horse's body. Elasticated ends and spring-loaded, stainless steel roller buckles make it easy to use.

Colours: Black or brown
Sizes: 40-54in
RRP £29.90
elico.co.uk

The **Rambo dry rug** from Horseware is perfect for the busy rider. Made from microfibre towelling cloth, it dries your horse in record time, absorbing moisture to leave a high-gloss and smooth finish.

Sizes: S-L
RRP £76
horseware.com



Designed with fussy feeders in mind, **TopSpec 14% Mix** is ideal for horses who reject low-starch cubes, but need additional feed alongside a balancer.

RRP £13.95 for 20kg
topspec.com



Horse AND Rider Tried & tested

Muddy Magic Mud Kure cream

Kills the bacteria responsible for mud fever.

RRP £17 for 200g
lincoln-equestrian.com



“Each winter my horse has suffered from mud fever, so I was dreading this season. However, I followed the instructions on the cream and have had no problems all winter long. I’m pleased.”

“I was sceptical of how small the tub was, but actually I didn’t need to use much of the cream.”

Great for horses who live out.

Tried & tested

Sealskinz winter riding gloves

Thermal, windproof and waterproof with cuffs to keep the weather out, they’re ideal for winter riding.

Sizes: S-XL
RRP £45
sealskinz.com/UK/



“They were very hard-wearing and fantastic for winter riding and yard duties. My hands stayed dry even when breaking ice on water troughs and washing horses in winter.”

“The lining sometimes pulled out when I took the glove off, making it harder to put on the next time as I had to line the fingers back up.”

Protect your hands from harsh winter jobs around the yard.

Tried & tested

Filta BAC cream

This antibacterial wound protector is suitable for many wound types, as well as offering UVA/UVB protection for sensitive areas.

RRP from £4.30 for 50g
aniwell-uk.com

“This has proved to be great at keeping my horse’s legs free from scabs and mud-related problems. I liked that it can also be applied to broken or grazed skin, sores and girth galls or used as a total sunblock, so it is useful to have in the tack box.”



“It’s quite sticky, which makes it tricky to apply, but this is probably why it adheres so well to the horse’s skin.”

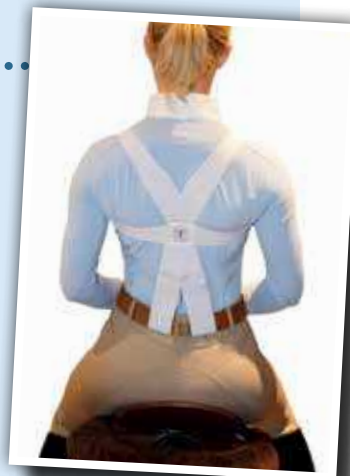
🛒 A tack-box essential for delicate-skinned horses.

Tried & tested

EquiSports Performance Posture Trainer

Designed to improve your posture and position on the flat and when jumping. It helps re-educate correct spinal alignment and shoulder position.

Sizes: XS-L
RRP £39.99
equisportperformance.com



“Before I tried it, I thought it seemed quite expensive, but it’s worth every penny! It really improved my posture on and off my horse, and helped me feel faults in my posture. I found it comfortable to wear and easy to use.”

“It would nice to be able to purchase this product in another colour rather than white.”

🛒 Any rider looking to improve their posture.

Tried & tested



Blue Chip Super Concentrated Calming Balancer

Including active calming ingredients in a complete, concentrated balancer.

RRP £24.95
bluechipfeed.com

“I fed this to my new horse, who was showing visible signs of stress when she moved to a new home. She settled into her new routine surprisingly quickly and her behaviour improved almost straightaway. I now have all my horses on the balancer – they all find it palatable and I can mix it into feed or feed it by hand.”

“I wish there was an option to buy a bigger tub, as each tub lasts one horse for a month.”

🛒 A complete balancer that’s also a calmer.

Tried & tested

All Stitched Up Charlotte dressage onesie

A onesie for dressage fans, it takes its inspiration from the tailcoat worn by Charlotte Dujardin while competing on Valegro.

Sizes: S-XL
RRP £40
allstitchedupdesigns.co.uk



“I loved the design of this onesie, and it was so cosy. It washed really well and there was no colour bleed onto the white ‘breeches’, either.”

“I’m 5ft 6in and, although the small size fitted my width perfectly, it wasn’t quite long enough in the legs and arms.”

🛒 Perfect for dressage fans.

£1,294
WORTH OF
PRIZES TO BE
WON!

Perfect PRIZES!

3

Button up

TO WIN!

Three lucky readers will each win a **Freddie Parker Newmarket shirt**, worth £79. Made from 100% Oxford cotton, the shirt has a classic cut and a retro, short button-down collar. Available in blue, white, pink or claret, in sizes S-XXL.



For more information, visit freddieparker.com

13

Baby soft

TO WIN!

Thirteen lucky readers will each win a 130g pot of **Skin Deep Healing balm**, worth £15.48. Made from natural, organic materials, the balm can be used on you and your horse to soothe areas of chapped, dry, cracked or itchy skin. It has a herbal aroma and can be applied safely to sunburn, rain scald, scars and abrasions.



For more information, visit finefettlefeed.com

1

Best foot forward

TO WIN!

One lucky reader will win a pair of **Spanish Riding boot Classics**, worth £210. With a flat sole, these boots are stylish and practical – great for riding, walking, the school run or going out. Available in brown, in sizes 2.5-10.



For more information, visit thespanishbootcompany.co.uk

2

Golden tickets

TO WIN!

Two lucky readers will each win a pair of **tickets and a car pass for Badminton Horse Trials**, worth £40, plus a **cross-country course walk** with KBIS sponsored rider, Izzy Taylor. Known for her superb cross-country riding, Izzy Taylor was the only rider to complete the tough 2014 Badminton course on both rides, KBIS Briarlands Matilda and Thistledown Poposki. This year, Izzy is hoping to compete on KBIS Briarlands Matilda for a fourth year running.



Badminton tickets and car pass are valid on Friday 6 May 2016 only.

For more information, visit kbis.co.uk

To enter, complete the form on page 152 or visit horseandridercompetitions.co.uk

Entries must be received by 29 February 2016

5 Fun on the farm

TO WIN!

Five lucky readers will each win a **Britains Big Farm Massey Ferguson 6613 tractor** (RRP £22.99) and **Kane low loader trailer** (RRP £19.99) from Tomy Toys. Britains Big Farm models are tough enough to take on any outdoor adventure, with free-rolling wheels and hard rubber tyres. The trailer model can be hitched to any Britains Big Farm tractor.



For more information, visit debenhams.com

7 H&R hoodie

TO WIN!

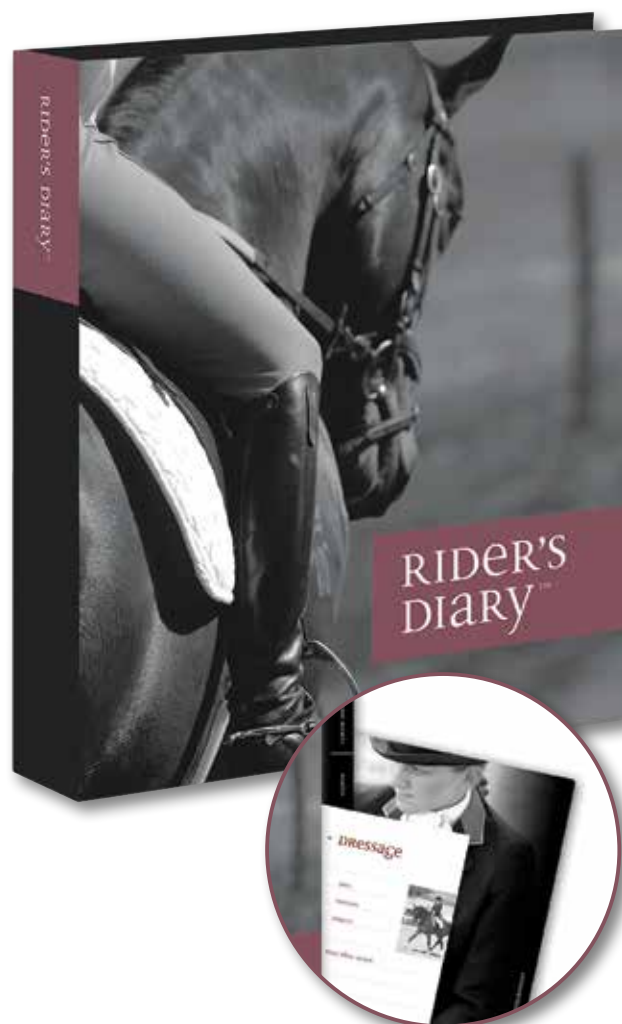
Seven lucky readers will each win a **Hack 21 Pegasus hoodie**, worth £32.99. Exclusive to the *Horse&Rider* shop, this varsity-inspired equestrian-themed hoodie is perfect for looking cool on the yard or in town. Available in navy/pink or grey/turquoise, in sizes S-XL.



For more information, visit horseandrideruk.com/shop

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up to four landscape-shaped photos as jpgs. Email your advert to horsesforsale@djmurphy.co.uk



BY MAIL Send your horse's details with four clear, landscape-shaped photos and an SAE to:

Horses for sale, **Horse&Rider**, Marlborough House, Headley Road, Grayshott, Surrey GU26 6LG.

See your advert online at horseandrideruk.com plus we'll publish a select few inside **Horse&Rider** magazine



Heavyweight hunter

● **16.3hh**, Irish Sport Horse gelding, 8 yrs. Established as a hunter, having completed last season with the North Norfolk Harriers. Has been used as a hireling. Sensible and jumps nicely. Good to hack. Excellent to handle. Competed TREC. Green in the school. £3,750. jojocook41@aol.com (Norfolk)



● **16.2hh**, Irish Draught X, gelding, 8 yrs. Unusually coloured. Even markings on both sides. Excellent in traffic. Needs bringing on. £4,000. 07722 432478 (Lincolnshire)



● **15.2hh**, cob gelding, 8 yrs. Not a novice ride. Done XC, DR, fun rides and hacking. Likes to jump. £1,900. aimeelou33@hotmail.com (Vale of Glamorgan)



● **To make 17hh**, warmblood mare, 5 months. By Wishes Do Come True. Fantastic breeding. Potential to go on in any discipline. £4,500. 07736 302292 (Stirling)



● **16.1hh**, TB mare, 10 yrs. Competed up to Medium DR with placings every time. Done TREC. Hacks alone or in company. £1,800. 07900 975101 (West Sussex)



● **13.1hh**, New Forest gelding, 15 yrs. Experienced PC pony. Done teams and camp. Great all-rounder. Not a novice ride. £2,500. 07866 891798 (Somerset)



● **15.1hh**, Connemara gelding, 9 yrs. Has hunted, done all PC activities, DR, SJ, XC. Three nice paces. Competing at 1m. £4,000. 07917 410496 (Worcestershire)



● **15.1hh**, cob mare, 5 yrs. Shown locally successfully. Hacks out alone or in company. Lots of potential. Will make a great all-rounder. £800. 07919 915054 (Surrey)



● **16.2hh**, TB gelding, 8 yrs. Perfect project horse. Showing good paces on the flat and a great jump. Good bloodlines and personality. £3,800. 07860 675959 (Dorset)



Jumping pony

● **14hh**, mare, 15 yrs. Winning up to Newcomers/Foxhunters. Schooling bigger at home. Fast against the clock. Done XC schooling. Hacks alone or in company in all traffic. Kind, willing mare. Loves to jump and is forward-going, but not nasty. Excellent in all ways. £2,750. 07530 529198 (Dyfed)



● **13.2hh**, cob mare, 5 yrs. Broken earlier this year. Hasn't put a foot wrong. Walks, trots and canters. Good to hack. £1,200.
07714 784460 (Staffordshire)



● **14.1hh**, Welsh Cob X, gelding, 13 yrs. Fun pony to hack, school and jump. Previously riding school pony. Up to date on vaccs. £2,000.
07539 107838 (Hampshire)



Eligible for ROR

● **15.2hh**, TB gelding, 7 yrs. Finished racing when he was 3 yrs. Retrained and competed in SJ, DR and PC eventing. Shown locally with good comments. Eligible for ROR. Done XC. Snaffle mouth. Has some sarcoids between front legs, but don't cause discomfort. £3,500.
07450 011300 (West Yorkshire)



● **16.2hh**, warmblood gelding, 4 yrs. Just backed. Working in nice outline. Started jumping. Hacks alone or in company. £3,950.
07983 407064 (Neath Port Talbot)



● **14hh**, Welsh Section D mare, 14 yrs. Good breeding. Easy to do in all ways. Good to hack. Sensible in open spaces and with traffic. £1,250.
07812 799073 (Torfaen)



● **14hh**, mare, 19 yrs. Fantastic SJ pony. Jumps 1.20m tracks with ease. Fantastic nature. No vices. Not a novice ride. £2,500.
07960 144302 (Clackmannan)



● **14.2hh**, cob mare, 11 yrs. 100% to hack in company, can be slightly nervous alone. Green in the school. Good in open spaces. POA.
07957 160779 (Kent)



Tockington Tarka

● **15.3hh**, Connemara X Hanoverian mare, 17 yrs. Three great paces with a bold and scopey jump. Not a novice ride and can be very strong. With the right rider she can go a long way. Perfect to shoe and clip. Happy to live in or out. Good-doer. £700.
07557 001016 (Gloucestershire)



● **15.1hh**, Welsh X, mare, 10 yrs. Enjoys jumping and dressage. No record of injuries and is up-to-date with vaccs. Full wardrobe. £1,500.
07568 066510 (Lincolnshire)



● **13hh**, Welsh X, gelding, 11 yrs. Needs a confident rider, but never nasty. Jumped up to 1.25m at home and competing 95cm. £4,000.
07570 407425 (Gloucestershire)



● **18hh**, warmblood X, gelding, 7 yrs. Sold as project. Not been worked for 18 months. £2,000.
07954 388727 (Greater Manchester)



● **14.2hh**, cob X, mare, 4 yrs. Three good, uphill paces. Has DR potential. Hacks alone or in company. Lovely personality. Tack available. £2,000.
07468 421576 (Surrey)



● **14.1hh**, cob gelding, 3 yrs. Lots of potential. Has been lightly hacked and proving to be safe. Needs more schooling. Good in all ways. POA.
07947 338326 (Buckinghamshire)



● **16.1hh**, TB mare, 13 yrs. Done all PC/RC activities, including SJ, DR, XC and ODEs. Has hunted. Not a novice ride. Snaffle mouth. £1,500.
07708 671290 (Leicestershire)

Exciting future potential

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Fire safety

Stables and barns are full of combustible matter, so taking all possible precautions to protect your horse and equipment is vital



The speed at which a fire can spread is unbelievable and can have devastating effects. And although it's impossible to completely fire-proof your stables, there are ways to minimise the risk of a fire spreading.

The method and material used in construction can play a big part in the structure's ability to resist fire. Masonry and steel are not combustible and if you're choosing timber, make sure it has been treated with fire-retardant – although this won't make it fire-proof, the spread of fire will be considerably slower than with untreated wood. Regardless of the construction materials used, the electrics that run through the facility, the quantity

of dust and the bedding – especially rubber matting, which burns at an alarming rate – all add up to a worrying recipe for disaster. Stables with partitions that reach up to the ceiling are the best at stalling the spread of fire. Install door bolts that a non-horsey fireman or neighbour will be able to undo quickly, as complicated clips will delay evacuation.

Having a fire procedure in place so that everyone who uses the facilities knows what to do can save not only your premises, but the lives of your horses. Having regularly-serviced fire extinguishers placed strategically around your yard means that small blazes can be tackled immediately and a smoke detection system can raise the alarm as

soon as possible. A sprinkler system is one of the best ways to stop the spread of fire and it will reduce your insurance premium, too.

One of the most common causes of fire at yards is old washing machines, so have the electrics checked or buy a new one for the yard. Keep your cobwebs and dust to a minimum, and consider the location of your muck heap carefully as they have been known to self-combust. Your hay and bedding should also be stored away from the main yard if possible. If you use bottled gas anywhere on the site, firefighters can refuse to enter the yard to save your horses, as the risk of explosion is too great, so plan where you store gas bottles carefully. ■



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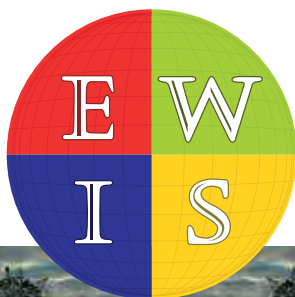
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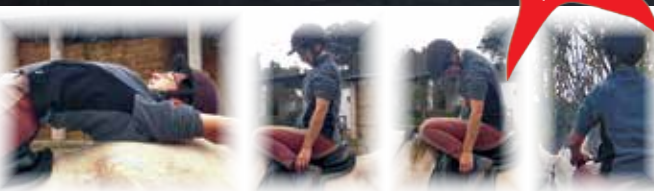
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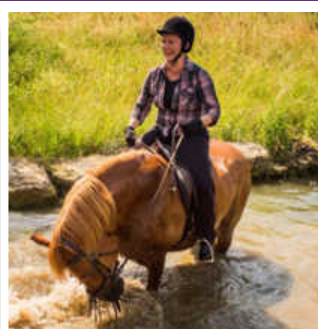
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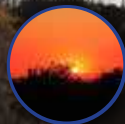


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Page 14 WIN! A lesson with Tina Fletcher and a KBIS Personal Accident policy

Question At which Olympics was Tina selected as a reserve rider?

Tie-breaker In 50 words or fewer, tell us why you and your horse would benefit from a lesson with Tina:.....

Please also provide one ridden photo of you and your horse, and a brief description of your ability and experience as a combination.

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Page 104 WIN! A six-night riding holiday for two to Spain

Question Which National Park is Fundació La Granja based close to?.....

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I understand that a rider weight limit of 100kg applies ☐

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☐ FFMAR/16 Skin Deep Healing balm

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☐ SBMAR/16 Spanish Riding boots Classic

Size (2.5-10)

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☐ HRMAR/16 Hack 21 Pegasus hoodie

Colour (Navy/pink or grey/turquoise)

Size (S-XL)

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☐ FTMAR/16 Britains Big Farm Massey Ferguson 6613 tractor and Kane low loader trailer

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Spring issue on sale 11 February 2016

My life with horses



Kelly McCarthy-Maine

From the beaches of Phuket to rural Wiltshire, via Irish horse sales and two new additions to her team, it's all go for Kelly!

Kelly McCarthy-Maine, amateur eventer and freelance journalist

Canadian Kelly has followed horses around the world, most recently to Wiltshire, where she has eight eventers. When she's not riding, she moonlights as an equestrian journalist, writing training features for *Horse&Rider*.

Monday

After more than a day's travelling by boat, speedboat, taxi, three planes, a rental car and through four airports, I arrive in Gorey, Ireland. I spent last week on a hysterically calamitous holiday on a boat in Thailand, but now I'm back into the horsey swing of things and am in Ireland for an auction and maybe to buy a new horse. I walk through the stables to say hello to the horses, before watching them warm-up and jump. I spend the day taking notes, writing very technical things like 'smart', 'yes please' or 'napped' and 'no!' in the margin of the sales catalogue.



Tuesday

Today, the showjumpers are showcased in the main arena, followed by the eventers going cross-country. I arrive early to watch how the horses are prepared, speak to some of the owners and go through the veterinary reports. Each horse has undergone a five-stage vetting with X-rays, so I email them to my vet back in Wiltshire and spend the afternoon on the phone discussing what I've seen. Then it's time to decide on a bidding strategy with my vet, trainer and husband. The bidding hangs for a few heart-pounding moments and then the hammer falls... seven-year-old chestnut mare Drummin Jacqueline 'Jackie' is coming home with me!

Wednesday

I might have had one too many while celebrating my new purchase, but scrambled eggs and coffee revive me. I make sure Jackie has everything she needs, then watch the event horses before tonight's sale.

A little dark bay mare made my heart jump every time I saw her. Bang! The hammer falls and Erkina Blaze 'Ruby' is coming home, too. I spend the evening sorting out transport back to the UK and go to bed just after midnight.



Thursday

I catch the red eye back from Dublin to prepare the isolation stables ready for the new arrivals. By the time they reach me, they'll have been through quite an experience and will be feeling a little fragile, so I like to have everything prepared so they can rest and settle in.

Friday

I ride three horses early this morning before collecting my lurcher puppy, Len, from a friend. Then my phone buzzes to inform me that the mares have arrived safely at the yard. I scoot back to see them, then it's home for a rest!



Saturday

Jackie and Ruby are pretty tired and spend the day resting, with a couple of trips to graze in-hand. It's wonderful to be back home with my herd, so I spend the day riding the others and generally pottering about.

Sunday

The mares seem settled this morning and their temperatures are steady, so I take them for a gentle hack in the sunshine. I've only been back in the saddle for a few weeks after a horror fall back in the summer and some serious reconstructive surgery, and the novelty of riding again still hasn't worn off.

On the way home I decide that, if my wrist is mended enough for me to sweep, muck out, ride and drive, surely I can type again. I've been freelancing for *Horse&Rider* for several years, but it's been a while since I've been able to make a contribution to the word count of my favourite magazine. Now I think it might be time to begin writing again. I test out my wrist by sending an email to Editor, Louise. The message I tap out gingerly on the keys: "I'm back!" ■



Read Kelly's first feature after her injury – Dressage with Anna Ross, in *Horse&Rider* Spring issue

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